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27 OCT 1995			
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Nana Saheb Peshwa

LIFE MUST BE GIVEN UP SOME DAY; WHY THEN SHOULD I DIE DISHONOURED? THERE WILL BE WAR BETWEEN ME AND YOU AS LONG AS I HAVE LIFE.

—*NANA SAHEB*

FREEDOM IS OUR BIRTH-RIGHT

—LOKMANYA TILAK

Nana Saheb Peshwa

and

The Fight for Freedom

by

ANAND SWARUP MISRA

with a foreword by

Dr. SAMPURNANAND

Published by
INFORMATION DEPARTMENT,
UTTAR PRADESH, LUCKNOW
1961

FIRST PUBLISHED
1961

I have committed no murder.
By means of entreaties
I restrained my soldiers,
and saved the lives
of 200 English women and children.

—NANA SAHEB *in his Ishtiharnama.*

x + x

Printed by
M. G. SHOME,
SUPERINTENDENT, PRINTING AND STATIONERY,
UTTAR PRADESH,
AT NEW GOVERNMENT PRESS, LUCKNOW (INDIA).



Shrimant Nana Saheb Peshwa

DEDICATED

with reverence

TO DR. SAMPURNANAND,

the celebrated scholar-statesman,

from whom the author derived inspiration

for this humble work.

सम्पूर्णानन्दनामा जनविदितयशा राजनीत्यग्रगण्यः,
मुख्यो मंत्री हि देशे गणितगणगणना-माननीयोऽसि धन्यः,
[illegible] करकमले सादरं स्वर्पयेऽहम्,
नानाशास्त्रेतिहासं पुस्तकमिमकृतं [illegible]म् ।

अपि स्वर्णमयी लंका न मे लक्ष्मण रोचते,
जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी।

THE CITY OF LANKA, EVEN THOUGH MADE OF GOLD, DOES NOT FASCINATE ME,
O' LAKSHMAN. THE MOTHER AND THE MOTHERLAND ARE GREATER THAN
HEAVEN ITSELF. — RAMA TO LAKSHMAN IN VALMIKI'S RAMAYANA.

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A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

—JOHN MILTON

Foreword

SRI ANAND SWARUP MISRA deserves the highest commendation for his book on Nana Saheb Peshwa. That he should have found time in the midst of his arduous duties—I believe he is one of the most hard-working and conscientious officers in the Secretariat — speaks volumes for his scholarly habits. We still remember the literary work done by officers of the Indian Civil Service in the old days ; it is good to find that the tradition still survives.

The book deals with one of the most important periods in Indian history. The first Indian War of Independence, the Indian "Mutiny", as it used to be called, was a momentous event in India's chequered political history. It ended in the British Crown assuming the government of the country. But this was merely one of the many changes brought about by the war and its aftermath. The social, economic and cultural life of the country, no less than the political, owes a great deal to the forces liberated by that great revolutionary upsurge, even though it seemingly ended in the complete collapse of the nation's attempt to throw off the foreign yoke.

Amongst the persons who played a prominent role in that drama was Nana Saheb. Scion of a great house, he possessed many of the virtues which had distinguished his ancestors, the old Peshwas ; but he was also heir to those weaknesses which had brought about the downfall of the Maratha empire. He created a brilliant circle of light round himself for a brief period and then suddenly disappeared from the scene like a will-o'-the-wisp, leaving behind a tradition which is still alive. There is a mystery surrounding his death which has made him a legendary figure It is this person whom Sri Misra has chosen as the hero of his book. It is needless to say that the history of Nana Saheb is the history of that noble struggle for liberty.

I am not a historian. It is not, therefore, within my competence to give an opinion, with any pretence to authority, about the value of the book as a contribution to Indian history. I can only say that as a layman it appeals to me as very interesting reading, and has added considerably to my knowledge of those events. I have been able to glance through only some portions of the typescript, but even this cursory reading is sufficient to justify my offering my sincere congratulations to the author.

Sampurnanand

NAINI TAL :
May 25, 1960

(SAMPURNANAND)

حُبِّ وطن از ملکِ سلیمان خوشتر
خارِ وطن از سنبل و ریحان خوشتر

A person's love for his country is a better thing than the kingdom of Solomon. A thorn of the native land is preferable and more pleasing than hyacinth and sweet basil of other lands.

Publisher's Note

In June 1960, the Government having seen the manuscript of the present book suggested that it would be an excellent supplement to the literature which the Information Department had been publishing about the First War of Independence. It was added that the publication of the work might be undertaken by the Department, if the author was agreeable to this suggestion.

On examination, the book was found suitable for publication by the Information Department. Government accordingly decided to publish it subject to the author's consent which was given readily and without reservation. The book is accordingly being published by the Information Department.

Uttar Pradesh played a memorable role in the 1857 struggle for liberty. Almost all the big cities in the State raised the banner of freedom after the first shots had been fired at Meerut. Most of the top leaders of the revolt—Nana Saheb, Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Rana Beni Madhav Singh, to name a few—belonged to Uttar Pradesh where the struggle had been most fierce and sustained. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the State Government had decided, some years ago, that the Information Department should publish a series of books dealing with the part played by this Pradesh in the movement of 1857. Accordingly, the Department has already brought out five volumes of the book entitled *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*, besides the biographical sketches of prominent leaders of the revolt, in Hindi. The present work is the latest addition to that literature.

In publishing this book the State Government do not accept any responsibility for the statements and comments contained in it. The description of facts, the narrative of events and the expression of views are the entire responsibility of the author himself. The publication of the work by this Department should not, therefore, be taken to imply that the State Government subscribe to them in any manner or degree.

The book has been published in the form in which it was compiled by the author who has also assisted in its printing and get-up. It is to be hoped that it will be found useful and instructive by all those who are interested in history and biography, and particularly in the events of the freedom struggle of the Nation.

INFORMATION DEPARTMENT,
UTTAR PRADESH.

APARAJITA PRASAD SINGH,
I.A.S.,
Director of Information.

THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.

—*GEORGE SANTAYANA*

Author's Note

The author is not a historian. His career has been in the Civil service of the Uttar Pradesh Government. In the course of his official duties, however, he had an opportunity of studying the incidents which took place at Kanpur during the "mutiny". The occasion had arisen some months before the proclamation of Independence on August 15, 1947. The question was about the transfer of the Kanpur Memorial Well Garden from the control of a private Society to the State Government, the object being to put the Garden to a purpose of general public utility. At that time, the entry of the general public to the Memorial Well Garden was restricted, and an intending visitor had to obtain a pass from the Society's Secretary. It was felt by the public of Kanpur as well as by the Government that such restrictions were incompatible with the dignity of the people in free India. It was felt also, both by the Society and the Government, that it might not be possible to protect the angel and the other constructions in the Memorial from destruction by members of the public who were vehemently opposed to the very existence of this unpleasant reminder of British rule. Eventually, it was decided, with mutual agreement between the Society and the Government, that the angel, the stone-screen enclosing the Memorial Well and the grave-stones in the premises, be removed to the compound of All-Souls' Church, and that the entire Garden, with the exception of a residential bungalow, be made over to the State Government to be used as a public park for the citizens of Kanpur.

It was in this context that the author had an opportunity of going into the history of the Memorial Well and of the other matters connected with the "mutiny" at Kanpur. Then it was that the author conceived the idea of writing a book on Nana Saheb. This idea gained stability from the impressive personality of Sri B. N. Jha, of the Indian Civil Service, who, at that time, was the Chief Secretary to the Government of Uttar Pradesh.* In that capacity he was in charge of the work relating to the transfer of the Memorial Well Garden.

Since then the author had been reading books on the "mutiny" and collecting material. In order further to get into the spirit of the events of 1857, the author occasionally went to reside at Bithoor where the *ex*-Peshwa Baji Rao had lived in exile and where Nana Saheb had been brought up and had lived as his adopted son. In that town had also resided the famous General of those days, Tatya Tope, whose nephew, Sri Narain Rao Tope, a political pensioner, still lives in the improvised mansion of the great hero.

It was the belief of the author, a belief which had been created by the study of the available material, and which has now become a conviction, that Nana Saheb was a person of honour and respectability, brought up

*Sri Jha is now the Home Secretary to the Government of India.

in the traditional ways as the adopted son of one who had once been the ruler of large territories in India. Nana Saheb, or Nana Rao, as he is occasionally called, possessed all the nobility of Indian character and was, for that reason, held in affection and esteem by his countrymen. The English officers and the European gentry of Kanpur, particularly their womenfolk, were greatly attached to him prior to the out-break, and even some time thereafter. It is the further conviction of the author that this gentle prince has been unjustly accused of crimes which, by reason of his birth, his up-bringing and the traditions of the House of Peshwas, he was incapable of doing.

Many characters in Indian history have suffered at the hands of historians—Maharaja Jai Chand of Kannauj, Shivaji the Great, Tipu Sultan, to mention a few names. But no person and his character have been so grossly and uniformly misrepresented as Nana Saheb. In the other cases, well-meaning authors have been careful in not omitting to put streaks of silver lining in what appeared to them to be dark clouds, but it is Nana Saheb alone who stands condemned through and through, and most unjustly so. But apart from the question of retrieving his character and his good name the study of Nana Saheb's life from other aspects too is a worthwhile topic. And with that study are related the main events of the "mutiny" ; so also many matters incidental thereto. Again, in order to see the "mutiny" in its proper perspective it is necessary to go further back into the history of India in order to provide the necessary context to the revolutionary upsurge of 1857. So an effort to cover these matters, with Nana Saheb as the central figure, has been made.

Of all literary arts, the writing of history is the most difficult, because it demands not only style but diligent research into small matters and a sound judgment. Judged by this standard, the present work would perhaps be a poor attempt at history-telling. But with trust in the indulgence of kind readers interested in the dramatic events of 1857, the author, claiming no proficiency as a student of history, has, in all humility, ventured to produce this book for whatever it is worth. And so it is that, as a lover of history, you have in your hands an amateur's humble contribution to an unforgettable phase of our history.

LUCKNOW :
Independence Day, 1961.

ANAND SWARUP MISRA

In Grateful Acknowledgment

To the revered Dr. Sampurnanand for his affectionate encouragement for this humble work, and for which the author can find no words to express the depth of his gratitude.

To the respected Sri Syed Ali Zaheer for finding time to go through the three-volume typescript and making valuable suggestions which have since been incorporated in the text. The author is also deeply grateful to him for his kind commendation of the book.

To Sri B. N. Jha, Sri Bhagwan Sahay and Sri Govind Narain from whom, as Chief Secretaries, the author learnt many things which have proved of value in this attempt at history-writing. Their graceful blessings have been with the author on all occasions.

To the Government of Uttar Pradesh in the Information Department for undertaking the publication of the book. The author is particularly indebted to Sri Aparajita Prasad Singh, Director of Information, Sri Bhagwati Sharan Singh, his predecessor, Sri Balbhadra Prasad Misra, Deputy Director, and Sri Lila Dhar Sharma, 'Parvatiya', Assistant Director, for their kind interest in making arrangements for the expeditious printing of the book and for their general assistance in many ways. The help of Sri Sabahuddin Umar, Journalist of the same department, is also to be recorded with appreciation

To Brigadier Rajendra Prasad of the Indian Army, a noted writer on military subjects, for the generosity in sending to the author, of his own accord, the manuscript of his book, *History of the Indian Army*, and giving much useful information which has been gratefully utilized.

To Sri H. N. Bahuguna, M. L. A., *ex*-Deputy Minister, Uttar Pradesh, Dr. R. K. Dikshit, Head of the Ancient Indian History and Archaeology Department, Lucknow University, and Dr. R. N. Nagar, Professor of Modern History in the same University, for their kind appreciation and commendatory remarks made on the typescript of the book, which encouraged the author to make many improvements in the text in the course of its final editing and printing.

To Dr. S. A. A. Rizvi, of the U P. Educational Service, and Secretary to the State Advisory Board for the History of Freedom Struggle, for some very useful material which, in his goodness, he so readily placed at the disposal of the author who shall never forget the debt of gratitude he owes to the learned Doctor and noted writer.

To Sri Shyam Swarup Mathur of the Language Department of the Uttar Pradesh Secretariat, for his sustained devotion in reading the proofs, and for his suggestions towards the composition and style

of the chapters as also in the general arrangement and finish of the book. Sri Shiam Behari Shukla, Superintendent of the same department, has also been helpful throughout. Similarly, Sri Chandra Kishore deserves the author's thanks for looking to the printing side of the book, and Sri Thakur Singh Parmar for his careful drawings of several maps. Sri Ugra Sen Verma is to be commended for general assistance of a miscellaneous nature.

To Sri C. L. Sahu and Sri Jagdeo Gupta, also of the Secretariat, who were good enough to assist in the preparation of the index.

To Sri R. Nath, a general consultant, who, in the midst of his multifarious assignments, could find time to prepare preliminary drafts of a couple of difficult chapters and to assist generally in the preparation of the manuscript for the press. Similarly, Sri Himmat Rai, the noted artist, and Sri Surendra Seth, a student-artist, have produced some impressive portraits.

To Sri M. G. Shome, Superintendent, Printing and Stationery, Uttar Pradesh, and his officers and staff both at Lucknow and Allahabad, for the keen interest they have taken in making the book elegant and attractive. Special mention may here be made of Sri D. I. Simeon, Deputy Superintendent, Sri S. C. Ghosh, his predecessor, Sri S. L. De, Sri J. Sinha and Sri S. L. Gupta, Assistant Superintendents, Sri G. P. Manan, Printers' Engineer, and Sri J. S. Gupta, Chief Artist. The author's thanks are also due to Sri T. F. Medley, Head Reader, Sri K. A. Mallick, Sri Chhedi Lal, Sri K. Seyne and Sri Ganesh Prasad Varma, Foremen, and Sri Ajit Kumar Ghosh, Sri Vinai Kumar, Sri P. C. Das, Sri P. J. Lartius and Sri H. L. Roy, Supervisors in the various Sections of the Press at Lucknow.

To the noted scholars and writers whose valuable works have been drawn upon in the composition of this book and in making it interesting and instructive. Their names appear at the relevant places in the text.

To the many unnamed friends and well-wishers for their helping hand in the completion of this publication.

And finally to SHRIMANT NANA SAHEB, the controversial figure of 1857, whose eventful life has provided the material with which the incidents herein portrayed have been woven.

The writing of the book has been an exhilarating experience. But more exciting and fascinating have been the goodness and the generosity of the gentlemen named, and those unnamed, whose sustained interest has been a source of support to the author. In varying degrees they all share whatever worthwhile there is in this. And as for its faults, the author would crave the indulgence of the generous reader.

The Author

NOTE

The author is grateful to the Government of Uttar Pradesh in the Information Department for publishing this work. But it is to be clearly understood that the matter, views and comments in the book are entirely the responsibility of the author, and that Government are in no way concerned with any of them.

AUGUST, 1961 | A. S. MISRA

THE WORLD IS A GARDEN WHICH IS IRRIGATED BY WEALTH—WEALTH IS A THING THE SOLE PROTECTION OF WHICH IS LAW—LAW IS A POLICY WHICH IS DEFENDED BY THE KING—THE KING IS LIKE A CITY WHICH IS BROUGHT INTO BEING BY THE ARMY—THE ARMY IS DEPENDENT ON WEALTH—WEALTH COMES FROM THE SUBJECTS—SUBJECTS' LOYALTY DEPENDS ON JUSTICE—JUSTICE IS THE PIVOT OF THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE WORLD.

Aristotle's description of the arrangement of the world

PART ONE

THE BACKGROUND AND CAUSES

(Chapters 1 to 14)

"Remember, I cannot have any attacks on my Indian empire," said King George V to Mahatma Gandhi, explaining that a rebellion could not be tolerated and had to be put down. This was on the occasion of the Round Table Conference in 1931, when Gandhiji had gone to meet the King at the Buckingham Palace at the royal invitation. The King's remark created an awkward moment for his distinguished guest, but with his characteristic courtesy and firmness Mahatmaji replied that, having accepted His Majesty's hospitality, he could not enter into a delicate political argument with His Majesty.

Earlier, to the King's first question, "Why did you boycott my son," Gandhiji had replied: "Not your son, Your Majesty, but the official representative of the British Crown."

So also was the War of 1857 a fight against the rule of a foreign power—a rule which had created the tyranny of the East India Company. It was not a conflict against individual Englishmen, many of whom were kindly treated by their Indian captors. NANA SAHEB too had acted likewise on more than one occasion.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY

A. THE VERDICT ON NANA SAHEB

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

C. A HISTORIAN'S TASK

D. ARRANGEMENT AND APOLOGY

> " *History must from time to time be re-written, not because many new facts have been discovered, but because new aspects come into view, because the participant in the progress of an age is led to standpoints from which the past can be regarded and judged in a novel manner*".
>
> —GOETHE.

A. THE VERDICT ON NANA SAHEB

The history of the Indian "Mutiny" is largely a record of "what man has made of man"*. At the same time it has a peculiar fascination over the minds of readers all over the world. This is so because the story of the revolt contains a whole series of dramatic events—and drama has a natural appeal to the human mind. And yet another reason is embodied in the poet's verse: "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought"†.

No name in the annals of the "Mutiny" is more well-known in the countries of the world than the name of Nana Saheb. The Rani of Jhansi is of course known in our own country, but her name is not equally well-known abroad. Not so with Nana Saheb. In England particularly, during the time of the insurrection, the name of Nana Saheb, who was often called the Nana, was a dreaded name for children in English homes.

And no name in the whole history of India was, and probably still is, more detestable to Englishmen than the name of the Nana. The British officials in India, both military and civil, regarded him as the blackest criminal in history. His head carried a reward of one lakh of rupees with a free pardon for any mutinous or disloyal acts of the person who could produce him before the authorities. Tireless efforts were made to apprehend him, but he had passed beyond the reach of British authority. Now and then this person or that person was arrested on suspicion of being the Nana, only to be released on disproof of identity.

British writers who do not as a rule indulge in unrestrained language have not

*And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man—*Wordsworth.*

†P. B. Shelley in *Ode to Skylark.*

hesitated to use vulgar adjectives with his name. Indeed, no name in Indian history has been so greatly and spitefully maligned as the name of Nana Saheb. There are of course a few magnanimous authors who have said words of sympathy for this unfortunate prince, but most of them have painted him in the darkest of colours.

The reasons are not far to seek. It was the common belief of the people both in India and in England that Nana Saheb had firstly resorted to an act of grave treachery against the inmates of the Kanpur "Fort" during the uprising of June 1857 and that subsequently in July he had got murdered in cold blood about 200 English women and children who were prisoners in his hands after he had captured Kanpur. So much was said and written against Nana's doings that even his own countrymen came to believe as true the grave allegations about him. The members of the general public during the days of the British used to associate Nana Saheb directly with the massacre of British evacuees at the Sattichaura Ghat at Kanpur and then with the butchery of women and children at Beebeeghar. It did not occur to his countrymen that the accusations might not be true. They took the thing for granted just as they erroneously believed in the "Black-hole" story made out against the ill-fated Nawab Siraj-ud-daula of Bengal.

It is true that the British historians have not light-heartedly attributed evil things to the Nana. The records of the "Mutiny" do contain some circumstantial evidence on which their judgment could have been founded. From this point of view it would be unfair to accuse those authors of any ulterior motives. But to accept, without the most searching examination, the authenticity of these accounts of his conduct, would be most unfair to Nana Saheb and his co-fighters in the freedom struggle, a struggle in which were laid the seeds of the Independence which materialised in 1947. It is to be remembered here that Nana Saheb could not be captured by the British who, on such capture, would have put him on some sort of trial. He would then have got an opportunity of making known his own version of the unfortunate incidents with which his name has been unjustly associated. Any judgment formed thus would have carried weight, or at any rate greater weight than the present one-sided versions about him. The view has been expressed that no court could have held him guilty. As for Nana Saheb himself he has left a declaration clearing himself of the alleged guilt of having ordered the massacre of English women and children who were prisoners in the hands of the rebels at Beebeeghar.

It was only after the achievement of Independence that serious thought was given by Indian writers about the possibility of Nana Saheb being innocent of the atrocities connected with his name. In particular, the noted historian Dr. Surendra Nath Sen has questioned the validity of the theory of Nana Saheb's hand in the Sattichaura Ghat and in Beebeeghar. At the same time, however, Dr. Sen has held him morally responsible for these happenings. This view has been endorsed by the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his Foreword (written in his capacity as Union Minister of Education) to Dr. Sen's book "Eighteen Fifty-seven". But the question of moral responsibility is a complex question ; at any rate, a debatable one. For one thing, the implication and the extent of moral responsibility are not an accepted proposition in all cases. For, in a sense, all Indians must share the moral responsibility for the theft by a misguided student of the pages of some valuable book of a public library in a foreign country. In the same sense all Germans, or the German nation as a whole, must share the responsibility for the war started by Hitler. So again, every American citizen must share the moral responsibility for the dropping of atomic bombs by the American

Air Force at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And similarly every British citizen must also share that responsibility because America and England were fighting as allies against Japan.

The point is that the question of moral responsibility is a vague and indeterminate one and so it would not be fair to consider that question with reference to Nana Saheb particularly when allowance is made for the troublesome times in which he lived. For one thing, it could be argued that the moral responsibility for all the atrocities committed on both sides during the "Mutiny" rested with the British who forced the greased cartridges on unwilling soldiers, an act which directly caused the dreadful acts following the uprising. Such an argument would be in line with the propaganda of the British who held the Indian National Congress responsible for the disturbances during the "Movements" of Mahatma Gandhi. A book was actually published by the Government of India entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances" in which an attempt was made to prove that the entire responsibility for the stern and on occasions inhuman measures adopted by the British Government in suppressing the nationalist movement for independence rested with the Congress who had created an urge for freedom in the hearts of the Indian people. No Indian would be prepared to accept this theory; for the same reason it would not be right to fix moral responsibility on Nana Saheb, if he could be absolved, as shown later in this book, of any direct responsibility for the occurrences.

Accepted history condemns many other figures of greater rank and power at various stages of Indian history. We have, for instance, the case of Maharaja Jai Chand of Kannauj whom history describes as a traitor to the country. There are also cases of Rajput princes collaborating with the Moghal emperors in extending and consolidating the latter's possessions in India. We have then the later rulers of India, both Hindu and Muslim, who proved themselves powerless to check the tide of British expansion. These personalities have been painted in dark colours in the history as we read it. The veteran historian, G. S. Sardesai, has suggested that all that has so far been written ought not be taken at its face value without a careful investigation which might tell us many things unknown before. In his view, therefore, a search of fresh materials is likely to disclose some relieving features even in the mistakes and failures of these men. He feelingly adds: "Shall we judge and condemn them without going into all the evidence? Even the lowest criminal is given a chance to defend himself. May not some kindred spirits rise to clear them of the stigma? I appeal for workers and trust they will not be found wanting."*

This humble effort on the life of Nana Saheb might perhaps fulfil a part of the hope, although a very insignificant part, of the veteran historian who is held in high esteem for his researches in Maratha history.

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is not to excite feelings of ill-will towards the British people. Nothing good is ever gained by ill-feelings, whether between individuals or between nations. On the contrary, a person who harbours ill-feelings towards another does injury to himself by making his own life miserable. The great tragedies in the lives of nations can be traced to the creation and nursing of ill-will against other peoples.

*Sardesai in *The Main Currents of Maratha History*, 1949 edition, p. 185.

At the same time, there is no intention to hold a brief either for the British or for the Indian people for the happenings in one of the greatest tragedies of history. Nor, indeed, is it possible, from a purely objective point of view, to defend the action of one party to the conflict against the other. If Indians committed atrocities on British men, women and children—about which English historians have written in profusion—there are, on record, events which show that an equally barbarous, if not worse, treatment was meted out by the British to the Indians. Thus, if there is justification for atrocities on the one side, there would be found equal justification for similar atrocities on the other. But actually there is no justification in favour of either party.

All the same, it must be stated that the happenings which did take place were the inevitable consequences of the times and of the conditions which then prevailed. If the Indian sepoys killed the English that was only a logical consequence of the attempt to free the country of foreign rule. This meant, according to the conditions of the time, that a war had to be waged and that war had to be a total war of annihilation of the British in India. There could have been no point, keeping the main purpose in view, in letting European civilians go anywhere they liked and thus enable them to organize an attack on the Indians. Then, if the British civilians had to be killed, there was again no point, keeping the main objective in view, to leave English women to the mercy of evil-minded men. In the first place, there was the question of the safe lodgment of these ladies, then the question of preventing them from falling into the hands of undesirable elements in society, the question of preventing them from molestation, criminal assault, and all the things that would have followed from the hands of an enraged population—enraged because of the grave risk to religion being in danger. And religion a hundred years before was a matter of importance as great as life and death itself. So there was no alternative to finishing the women-folk too, and so on. Indian history is full of instances where the own near and dear ones have killed their women in order to prevent them from being disgraced by the enemy.

In saying all this, it is not intended to say that whatever the Indians did was good and pious and should have been done. After all, a man was born in India so many years afterwards who found a better and a civilized method of freeing the country of British rule. Thus Mahatma Gandhi, by his message of love and non-violence, was able to get freedom for the country without the shedding of a drop of English blood. Through him, independence came gracefully, gracefully for the Indians who obtained it by non-violent means and gracefully also for the British who withdrew without violence or bloodshed.

On the part of the British too, there were compelling circumstances which made them resort to cruel deeds on many occasions. Having established an empire in India by force of arms and the sacrifice of men and material for a long period of years the English people, a hundred years before, could not be expected to leave their bag and baggage and peacefully retire to England. This was a psychological impossibility. And in order to maintain their empire or to reconquer it, they had to adopt the means which they thought were the only means available in the circumstances. The number of Englishmen in India was small and so they thought that by doing acts which would strike terror in the hearts of the people, they would be able to meet the menace of the revolution. It was apparently with this end in view that they committed acts which did strike terror in Indian hearts. But having said so much, it ought to be added that whatever may have been the circumstances, the actions of the British too cannot be justified at the bar of humanity.

There is also the question about the fallibility of human judgment. Actions which were good from the view-point of Indians were evil from the view-point of the English and *vice versa*. The Indians have sung praises, and rightly so, of the Indian martyrs who lost their lives in the struggle for independence in 1857. Likewise, the British have filled their books with praise for the Englishmen who saved their empire. But neither on the Indian side nor on the British side, is there any unanimity of opinion. On the one hand we find English historians praising Clive, Warren Hastings and Dalhousie for the great services which they rendered to the English nation ; on the other hand, historians, also English, do not hesitate to condemn the actions of these very people. The trial of Warren Hastings is a classic example. He was extolled as the builder of the British empire in India and yet, after his retirement, the eminent English statesmen, Edmund Burke and others of his way of thinking, brought Hastings to trial before the House of Lords for his doings in India. Likewise, there is no unanimity amongst Indian historians regarding the incidents of 1857.

Anything done to create ill-feelings in the Indian mind against the British (or against any other country) would also be improper from another point of view. The British left the country with good grace and sovereign India is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations. There are bonds of friendship between Indian and English peoples. There are many Indians who, on their visit to England, make it a point to call on English officers who had, at one time, been serving in India. There are Englishmen* who are still remitting pensions to the persons who were in their private employ in India. The author personally knows of an English officer now in England who never fails to send a cheerful Christmas and new year's message to a person who used to be his orderly peon.

These are good things to remember and to reflect upon. It would be a pity if anything is done to replace these feelings by feelings of bitterness.

Of course, we must do all that is possible to retrieve the reputation of the Indian martyrs whose character has been misrepresented by some of the English writers or by the officers of the British Government of that time. In many instances the dark picture of Indian patriots painted by them is not founded on proved facts ; in many others there is such a great exaggeration of truth that it virtually borders on falsehood. This is more so in the case of Nana Saheb than for any other figure of the great revolt.

Books have been written by Indian authors, both in Hindi and English, in which an attempt has been made to justify the actions of Indians and to condemn, in bitter and even unbecoming language, the deeds of the British. Some of these were written before the achievement of Independence, others later. In the books written after India became a sovereign country this bitterness was hardly called for. A new chapter in the history of the country has now begun and, though the facts of history cannot be obliterated or suppressed nor is it necessary to do so, there can be no reason for ill-will now towards the British people as a nation. If the English are to be blamed for having created an empire in India, then from one point of view our own countrymen themselves can be blamed for having allowed that empire to be created. For a people to enslave another people is a sin ; it is a greater sin for a people to allow themselves to be enslaved. And there is also the point that if the British had not

*Sir William Christie, late of the I. C. S., is one of them. He belonged to the U. P. cadre of the service and in his later years served as Finance Secretary and then as Chief Secretary. At the time of the transfer of power he was Chief Commissioner of Delhi and retired from that office..

conquered India the other nations of Europe, notably the French, who had their foothold in India, would have conquered the country on account of the same weaknesses in our political and social life which enabled the British to occupy our land. So the best policy now, when the British have liquidated their Indian empire, is to let bygones be bygones and not to let the Indian citizen be filled with any hate or ill-will towards the outgoing power. Nonetheless, let those interested in history have the historical facts before them—facts which are presented in an objective manner and in accordance with the historian's code of conduct which has been stated by our renowned historian, Dr. Ram Prasad Tripathi, in the following words :

"Nationalism is egoistic and prevents the visualization of facts as they are and distorts the truth. History should be viewed in the totality of knowledge, in the perspective of the globe".

C. A HISTORIAN'S TASK

"The history of the world,
With all its volumes vast,
Hath but one page."

"One page." The poet could as well have said "one sentence". Once a king in his curiosity to know all about the past commanded the learned men of his court to write about it. The king remained forgetful of his order for many years until one day he sent for the learned men who said that they had completed the work in sixty volumes. The king was pleased but having neither the time nor the patience to read them, ordered the writers to compress the work in three volumes. After many more years of labour the learned men produced the three-volume book before their royal master. But by this time the king had grown feeble and sick and so desired that a single volume would do. By the time this was achieved the king had grown very old and his sight was almost gone. So he asked the chief scholar to state in one sentence the summary of all that had been written. After some hesitation the scholar informed the king that the gist of the whole matter was that many generations of men had been born, had toiled and loved, had suffered and died. The king was annoyed as he thought that he could easily have said that much himself. What the king did to the scholar, who too had now the weight of years over him, is not material to the point, but the scholar was stating the truth that the history of the world can be compressed in a single sentence.

Also material is the lamentation of the king over the shortness of human life and the length of history.

But the king's grief was not justified because life is not too short nor history too long either. We can well satisfy our curiosity by reading big or small works of a long line of devotees of knowledge according to the amount of time at our disposal, our ability and the degree of our craze for the past.

However that may be, man will ever have a craze for knowing the past and so people will continue to read history and historians will continue to write about bygone days. Your own deep interest in the past is the reason why this book is in your hands to-day.

All the same, a historian's task is far from easy. His work has been the subject of taunting comments. Napoleon used to say that history was "a fable agreed upon". This is also what the Roman emperor, Pilate, used to say in slightly different words. Sir Robert Walpole went to the length of saying that "all history is a lie". Henry Ford in a joking remark said that "history is just bunk". Lord Chesterfield thought that "history is only a confused heap of facts". Lastly, according to Thomas Wright

"history is nothing more than legend and romance".

But these definitions of history have been made in a light-hearted vein. Real history is something entirely different and serves a great purpose, namely the purpose of revealing the past with a view to instructing the present. A historian has to proceed, by analysis, to collect and arrange a mass of details in a living picture. He tries to separate fiction from falsification.

The existence of critics of history adds to the task of the historian. This is, however, to the good because the historian takes care not to tread on cheap ground, but to build his edifice on solid foundations and adorn it with an impressive design. In the words of Leibaiz, a historian has to rely on "testimony" just as in physics one has to rely on experiment, in law on authority and in mathematics on genius. A good historian should consult authors who have spoken of the events, the archives in which unpublished documents are to be found, private letters, and even tradition. He has to gather probabilities from every source and then compare these probabilities and weigh and discuss them before deciding. *

In the case of the history of India, and more particularly the history of the "Mutiny", the difficulties of presenting an altogether true account are greater because during the British period India did not, with a few notable exceptions, produce anyone ready to take the trouble and the odium of writing a true history of her past, especially the past connected with British administration. True, English writers have written remarkable books on Indian history, but these in their very nature cannot be expected to give an altogether objective account although the authors were men of honour and did not intentionally misrepresent facts and circumstances. But they did not have a living faith in the customs, manners and languages of the people of India and could not fully understand their social institutions and do justice to their motives and comprehend their peculiar situations. It was for these reasons that the late Professor Huxley thought that the works on Indian history written by English authors are not "trustworthy". In the words of Professor Goldwin Smith "each nation, in the main, writes its own history best ; it best knows its own lands, its own institutions, the relative importance of its own events, the characters of its own great men. But each nation has its peculiarities of view, its prejudices, its self-love, which require to be corrected by the impartial or even hostile view of others".†

Another difficulty arises from the fact that the records of the East India Company on which the history of British rule in India is largely based are not altogether authentic. Writes Grant Duff in his *History of the Marathas* : "Many services performed without any great degree of exertion or ability have, in consequence of their results, been extravagantly praised and given a tone to Indian despatches which prejudices sober judgment". State papers concerning India presented to the British Parliament were altered to suit the temporary views of political warfare or abridged out of a mistaken regard for the tender feelings of survivors.‡ Even private letters are not altogether trustworthy, for men some times pose artificiality even in their familiar correspondence.

Faced with these difficulties, the task of the historian writing about the "Mutiny" is an arduous one for it is not easy "to

*From Major Basu's 'Rise of the Christian Power in India", Volume I.

†Goldwin Smith's "Lectures on the Study of History", second edition, pp. 37-38.

‡This was stated by Peter Cunningham who, in 1853 published Captain Joseph Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs". The statement was made in the advertisement to the second edition of the book.

separate the true from the false, the certain from the uncertain and the doubtful from that which cannot be accepted".* Take the history of any country and it will be found that on many incidents of popular interest there is more than one account each violently differing from the other and all based on testimony which cannot *prima facie* be questioned. We have the classic example of how Princess Victoria received the news that was brought to her in the early morning of June 20, 1837, that, her uncle King William IV having yielded his last breath a few hours before, she was now to wear the Crown of England. Here are the several versions :

Lytton Strachey's version—King William died in the early hours of June 20, 1837, at Windsor. Immediately after, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, drove post-haste from Windsor to Kensington Palace where the Princess was living with her mother, the Duchess of Kent. Covering the distance in about two hours they arrived at 5 o'clock, and it was only with considerable difficulty that they gained admittance. At six the Duchess woke up her daughter and told her that the Archbishop and the Lord Chamberlain wished to see her. She got out of bed, put on her dressing-gown, and went, alone, into the room where the messengers were standing. The Lord Chamberlain fell on his knees and officially announced the death of the King ; the Archbishop added some personal details. Looking at the bending, murmuring dignitaries before her, she knew that she was Queen of England.† (Here Strachey's account ends.)

According to Greville—On the basis of information which Greville received from the Lord Chamberlain himself, this is what happened : "On the morning of the King's death, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham arrived at Kensington at five o'clock and immediately desired to see 'the Queen'. They were ushered into an apartment, and in a few minutes the door opened and she came in, wrapped in a dressing-gown, and with slippers on her naked feet. Conyngham, in a few words, told her their errand, and as soon as he uttered the words 'Your Majesty', she instantly put out her hand to him, intimating that he was to kiss hands before he proceeded. He dropped on one knee, kissed her hand, and then went on to tell her of the late King's death. She presented her hand to the Archbishop, who likewise kissed it, and when he had done so, addressed to her a sort of pastoral charge, which she received graciously, and then retired." (Greville's Memoirs.)

Version of Miss Wynn, a lady on the personal staff of the Princess—The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain reached Kensington Palace at about five ; they knocked, they rang, they thumped for a considerable time before they could rouse the porter at the gates ; they were again kept waiting in the courtyard, then turned into one of the lower rooms, where they seemed forgotten by everybody. They rang the bell, desired that the attendant of the Princess Victoria might be sent to inform Her Royal Highness that they requested an audience on business of importance ; after another delay, and another ringing to inquire the cause, the attendant was summoned, who stated that the *Princess* was in such a sweet sleep she could not venture to disturb her. Then they said, "We are come to the *Queen*

*The Maxims and Reflections of Goethe, no. 458.
†Queen Victoria, 1953 edition, pp. 40–41.

on business of State, and even her sleep must give way to that. It did; and, to prove that she did not keep them waiting, in a few minutes she came into the room in a loose white night-gown and shawl, her night-cap thrown off, and her hair falling upon her shoulders, her feet in slippers, tears in her eyes, but perfectly collected and dignified."*

According to Victoria's own Journal—"I was awoke at 6 o'clock by Mama, who told me that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here and wished to see me. I got out of bed and went into my sitting room (only in my dressing gown) and alone, and saw them. Lord Conyngham (the Lord Chamberlain) then acquainted me that my poor Uncle, the King, was no more, and consequently that I am Queen."

According to Bishop Fulford's account—When the Princess had received the Lord Chamberlain's announcement of the King's death, she looked towards the Archbishop and observed, "I ask your prayers on my behalf".

According to several successive writers, on hearing of the King's death, the Archbishop and the Queen forthwith knelt and offered an entreaty to the Almighty, the manner of the prayer having been set forth differently by different writers.

It will be observed that the several versions differ from each other on certain vital points. The first is about the offering of prayers. Writing in 1893 (when the Queen was still reigning), John Jeaffreson, after referring to the various accounts on this point, observes that the probability is that the Archbishop merely assured his Sovereign that his own prayers and the prayers of all the priests in the kingdom would ascend to heaven in her behalf, and followed up this assurance with a few words of counsel and benediction. He goes on to add that "such an address would seem 'a sort of pastoral charge' to the Marquis (the Lord Chamberlain), who, after an interval of a few days, told Mr. Greville what he could remember of the interview".† Jeaffreson also questions the account of other writers that the Archbishop and the Queen forthwith knelt and offered prayers in the manner described by those writers.

The other point is about the nakedness of the Queen's feet. Greville's account says that her slippers were on *naked* feet. Jeaffreson thinks that the greater probability is that the Queen had put on stockings of a colour identical to the colour of the skin of her feet. He draws the conclusion that the Lord Chamberlain (from whom Greville drew his account) was "misled on this point by the colour of the stockings worn by the young Queen". He adds that "the Princess could not, even in the hurry of the moment, have omitted to clothe her feet in the customary way".

Similarly, there is the dispute about the gown which the Princess was wearing—whether it was a *night-gown* or a *dressing-gown*. The difference between the two is important—a night-gown is a loose, informal apparel worn during sleep, while a dressing-gown is a dress more elegant and formal resembling a loose morning robe. As against the account of Miss Wynn, it has been suggested by others that she appeared before the visitors in a suitable morning costume. Miss Wynn's account of the Princess's night-cap being thrown off and her hair falling upon her shoulders

*Diaries of a Lady of Quality.
†Victoria, Volume I, page 85.

has also been doubted. Writes John Jeaffreson : "The notion that she ran in upon them in the wild undress of Miss Wynn's story may be dismissed with a smile."

D. ARRANGEMENT AND APOLOGY

The book is divided into four parts :

PART I deals with the BACKGROUND AND CAUSES, comprising Chapters 1—14 ;

PART II, the REVOLT AND ITS SUPPRESSION, comprising Chapters 15—40 ;

PART III, the CONSEQUENCES, comprising Chapters 41—51 ;

PART IV, the APPENDICES.

There are seven Appendices, A to G, in which, besides the glossary and the bibliography, certain matters of general interest, such as sketches of some notable Indians and Europeans of the time, a son's revenge, and rebel Europeans, have been narrated.

The story of the "Mutiny" is but a link in the chain of India's long history. In order to present the narrative of the great uprising in its proper setting, a running survey of India's history from ancient times has been given in the first part of the book. Then again, even though the first war for Independence, as the "Mutiny" really was, was lost in 1857, it was won in 1947. For this reason, a summary account of the period between 1857—1947 has been included in the third part in Chapter 49, entitled "Growth of Nationalism ; Mahatma Gandhi shows the way".

The first part also gives a somewhat detailed account of the Peshwas of Poona in Chapter 5, and for two reasons. Of the many factors which contributed to the rebellion of 1857, one was the desire of the people to replace British rule by indigenous rule. With all the good things which may have been associated with foreign rule and with all the evils inherent in self-rule, the people, after having tasted the fruits of foreign rule, were now desirous of the return of indigenous administration The question was to find an institution which would take up the reins of government on the passing of the British. The Rajputs had spent themselves up by the beginning of the 18th century and could not come up to fill the void. Before the British established their supremacy there were only two powers in India competing for supremacy, namely the Court of Delhi and the Peshwas of Poona. The Court of Delhi had, however, already gone into decadence and the Peshwas were the only power in India with whom the British had to contest for supremacy. The empire of India had really been lost to the British, not by the Court of Delhi, but by the Peshwas of Poona. In the natural order of things, therefore, the restoration of Peshwaship in one form or the other under the nominal aegis and titular headship of the Court of Delhi was a feasible possibility. In the context of this position the restoration of Peshwaship was a dominant motive which filled the minds of the leaders of the revolt. As the restored Peshwaship was intended to function under the Emperor of Delhi who was to be a constitutional head, the Muslims also endorsed this course of action.

The Peshwaship was to be restored in the person of Nana Saheb who was the eldest surviving representative of the line of Peshwas. But after the recapture of Kanpur by the British, Nana Saheb lost the threads of the revolt which now came under the leadership of Rao Saheb, his nephew, who was formally proclaimed Peshwa on the occupation of Gwalior by Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and the other leaders of the revolt.

It may also be mentioned that in the beginning all leaders of the revolt were agreed that the indigenous rulers were to administer the various parts of the country as governors under the suzerainty of the surviving descendant of the Moghal line, the Emperor Bahadur Shah. Difficulties, however, arose

at a later stage on the fall of Delhi in September 1857 and the consequent capture of the Emperor by the British. There was now none to take the place of Bahadur Shah and the leaders of the revolt had to supply the place by another sovereign. At that moment the restoration of Peshwaship as a sovereign power in the country was the only possibility and offered a fairly good alternative to the restoration of the Kingship of Delhi. So this now became the new objective. It was in pursuance of it that Rao Saheb was proclaimed Peshwa at Gwalior in June 1858.

Another reason for a more detailed account of the Peshwas of Poona is their fascinating and instructive history. How after Shivaji, his later successor, Sahuji, became only a titular ruler with the real power vesting in his Minister, Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa, and how the subsequent Peshwas became the virtual kings of the large empire ruling in the name of the descendants of the great Shivaji, is an interesting story. Besides, at least two of the Peshwas, Baji Rao I, the second Peshwa, and Sawai Madhav Rao Ballal*, the fourth Peshwa, were rulers of great distinction, being reckoned amongst the most illustrious figures of Indian history.

In these circumstances, a somewhat longish chapter has been devoted to the Peshwas of Poona, giving an account of their history and administration in order that the uprising could be seen in its broader context.

The author's apology

Any work on history, like any piece of art, is bound to remain a sub-standard one. But so long as a historian in writing his story subdues his personality and tries to view the events as objective facts, he will have reason to congratulate himself, for it is impossible for any one to eliminate his personality altogether. The author of the present work claims nothing more. If he receives the forbearance of the thoughtful reader, he would feel rightly justified in having undertaken this venture.

And though not a professional historian, the author derives some satisfaction from the fact that amateur historians too have written good and interesting histories. Some critics of professional historians have gone to the length of saying that amateurs have something useful to say about history, apart from writing it better. The author of the present work would much hesitate to subscribe to that view, and must leave it to the kind reader to judge whether this work fulfils his expectations about the performance of an amateur writer.

I love my country better than my family,
but I love humanity better than my country.

FENELON.

*Also known as Madhav Rao I.

CHAPTER TWO

OUR COUNTRY, OUR HISTORY AND CULTURE

A. THE UNIQUENESS OF INDIA

B. OUTLINE OF INDIAN HISTORY

CHART OF INDIAN HISTORY.

INDIAN CHRONOLOGY.

GENERAL SURVEY.

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES.

C. CULTURAL HERITAGE

D. INDIAN WOMANHOOD

A. THE UNIQUENESS OF INDIA

अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा, हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः ;
पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी वगाह्य, स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ।

—KALIDAS IN "*Kumar Sambhava*"

IN this verse Kalidas describes in picturesque language how the king of the mountains, the Himalaya, is situated in the direction of the heavenly gods, the northern side of India, penetrating the oceans on the east and the west, and poised like a pair of scales trying to weigh the earth. In language equally picturesque the Simon Commission thus described the situation of India : "The central mass of Asia throws out to the west, beyond the Urals, the sub-continent which we call Europe, and to the south, beyond the higher barrier of the Himalayas, the sub-continent which we call India."

Our sub-continent is a vast country with an area of about 13,63,000 square miles, measuring about 2,000 miles from north to south and some 1,800 miles from east to west. Its land frontier is approximately 9,400 miles long and the coast line measures about 3,500 miles. In area the country is about fifteen times bigger than Great Britain which together with Ireland is about the size of Uttar Pradesh. By another method of comparison, India is only a little smaller than the whole of continental Europe without the Soviet Union. Compared to Japan it is eight times bigger than that country. There are only six countries in the world which are larger than India, so our country takes its place as the seventh largest country in the world.

The States comprising India are bigger than some of the important countries of the world. Thus the State of Bombay* is much bigger than Japan or Germany, being only a little smaller than France. The State of Uttar Pradesh is only slightly smaller than Italy. The smallest Indian State of West Bengal is twice the size of Denmark and thrice the size of Belgium. Bihar is bigger than Greece, Punjab is more than one and a half times greater than Ireland and the State of Madras equals the area of England.

With a population of 36,12,00,000 India contains over 15 per cent. of the world's inhabitants (2,40,00,00,000) which means that every seventh person in the world is an Indian. Only the population of China is greater than that of India, which is more than two and a half times more populous than the United States of America. In fact the three States of Uttar Pradesh, Bombay* and Bihar contain almost as many human beings as inhabit the United States. Taking Indian States, Uttar Pradesh almost equals Germany in population ; Bombay* has more inhabitants than France or Italy. Denmark is only twice as populous as the city of Calcutta.

We can also remind ourselves that our country is one of the largest, most populous and richest countries of the world. The largest irrigation work and the longest mileage of canals in the world exist in India. India is also the largest producer of oil-seeds, ground-nut and tea in the world. It is the largest peninsula and has the longest railway platform (Sonepur in Bihar) in the world.

In the Himalaya we have the highest mountain range with the highest peak in the world and in architecture our country is the proud possessor of the most magnificent and beautiful edifice, the Taj Mahal, one of the seven wonders of the world.

Our form of government is sovereign democracy in the widest sense of that expression. We have a written constitution which in wisdom and excellence is reputed to be one of the best-drafted constitutions in the world. As the Head of the State there is the President of India acting on the advice of the Union Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister who is the leader of the political party commanding a majority vote in the House of the People. Untouchability has been abolished and the Constitution guarantees to the people certain rights which are fundamental to the well-being of society, such as the right to liberty, the right to equality, the right of free expression of opinion, the right to worship and the free exercise of religious practice. Every adult has the right to vote, and the protection and promotion of the interests of the minorities and of weaker sections of the population has been particularly safeguarded. Finally, the rule of the law finds the freest expression as the basic concept of our Constitution.

India has led the world in music and the other fine arts and is the inventor of the wheel, the very basis of all civilization. Ancient India also achieved excellence in the practical subjects of medicine and surgery, applied chemistry and pharmacy, metallurgy and dyeing, besides architecture, sculpture, painting and the numerous handicrafts. In the ancient commercial world, it enjoyed a virtual monopoly with the Roman empire as her principal customer. The culture of India was also carried to far-off lands beyond her sea and land frontiers. This was possible because India was supreme in her marine. Speaking about Indian ships, the French writer, F. B. Solvyns, in his *Les Hindous* (1811) has written : "In ancient times the

*Now reorganized into the two States of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

Indians excelled in the art of constructing vessels, and the present Hindus can, in this respect, still offer models to Europe, so much so that the English, attentive to everything which relates to naval architecture, have borrowed from the Hindus many improvements which they have adapted with success to their own shipping. The Indian vessels unite elegance and utility, and are models of patience and fine workmanship."

The credit for the invention of the numerals of arithmetic and the decimal system also belongs to India.

India has also been the land of famous prophets and saints, men of letters, mathematicians and scientists, politicians and administrators, generals and rulers. In India have also flourished some of the greatest thinkers of the world—the Lord Buddha of old and the Mahatma of our own times.

B. OUTLINE OF INDIAN HISTORY

CHART OF INDIAN HISTORY.

PERIODS

- Pre-historic —Indus Valley (3000 to 1500 B. C.)
- Historic
  - Ancient
  - Medieval
  - Modern

ANCIENT .. 1500 B.C.—A.D. 1200

- Vedic ..
  - Rig-Vedic (1500—1000 B. C.)
  - Later Vedic (1000—600 B. C.)
- Post-Vedic
  1. Sutra and Epic Age
  2. Buddha Period
  3. Maurya Period
  4. Sung, Kanva and Andhra
  5. Kushanas
  6. Nagas and Vakatakas
  7. Gupta Period
  8. Harsha Period
  9. Rajputs

MEDIEVAL .. 1200—1707

- Sultanate Period (following Prithviraj's death in 1192)
- Moghul Period (ending with Aurangzeb's death in 1707)

MODERN .. 1707 to date

- Marathas and Sikhs
- British [1757 (Plassey)—1947]
- Independent Sovereignty (A. D. 1950)

INDIAN CHRONOLOGY

3000 B.C. ..	..	Indus Valley Civilization.
1500 B.C.	..	Vedic Civilization.
563 to 483 B.C.	..	Birth and death of Buddha.
540 to 468 B.C.	..	Traditional dates of birth and death of Mahavira.
326 B.C. ..	..	Alexander's invasion of India.
324 B.C. ..	..	Rise of Maurya Dynasty.
305 B.C. ..	..	Seleucus Nicator defeated by Chandra Gupta Maurya.
273 to 232 B.C.	..	Reign of Ashok.
A.D. 320 to 500	..	Gupta Dynasty ; Golden Age of Indian Art, Science and Literature.
A.D. 450 to 457	..	Hun invasions.
A.D. 480 to 490	..	Break-up of Gupta Empire.
A.D. 711 ..	..	Arab conquest of Sind by Mohd. Bin Qasim.
A.D. 735 ..	..	First Parsi Settlement in India.
A.D. 1000 to 1026	..	Muslim invasions of India by Mahmud of Ghazni.
A.D. 1192 ..	..	Defeat and death of Prithviraj, the last Rajput King of Delhi.
A.D. 1192 to 1290	..	Establishment of Muslim Rule in North India : Reign of Slave Kings.
A.D. 1320 to 1414	..	Tughlak Sultans of Delhi.
A.D. 1398 ..	..	Invasion of Taimur.
A.D. 1451 to 1526	..	Lodi Sultans of Delhi.
A.D. 1469 ..	..	Birth of Guru Nanak.
A.D. 1498 ..	..	Vasco da Gama reaches Calicut.
A.D. 1526 ..	..	Establishment of Moghal Empire by Babar.
A.D. 1556 to 1605	..	Reign of Akbar.
A.D. 1597 ..	..	Death of Rana Pratap.
A.D. 1600 ..	..	East India Company founded under Royal Charter.
A.D. 1612 ..	..	First English Factory at Surat.
A.D. 1627 ..	..	Birth of Shivaji.
A.D. 1658 ..	..	Coronation of Aurangzeb.
A.D. 1675 ..	..	Execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, 10th Guru of the Sikhs.

A.D.	1680	Death of Shivaji.
A.D.	1707	Death of Aurangzeb.
A D.	1739	Nadir Shah sacks Delhi.
A.D.	1757	Battle of Plassey.
A.D.	1761	Third Battle of Panipat.
A.D.	1765	Grant of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the East India Company.
A.D.	1774 to 1785	Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India.
A.D.	1792	Ranjit Singh establishes a Sikh Empire.
A.D.	1799	Death of Tipu Sultan, Partition of Mysore.
A.D.	1829	Prohibition of Sati.
A.D.	1839	Death of Ranjit Singh.
A.D.	1853	Opening of Railways and Telegraphs.
A.D.	1856	Annexation of Avadh by British.
A.D.	1857	Indian 'Mutiny'.
A.D.	1858	Transfer of India from Company to the Crown.
A.D.	1869	Birth of Mahatma Gandhi.
A.D.	1885	First Meeting of the Indian National Congress.
A.D.	1905	Partition of Bengal.
A.D.	1911	Partition of Bengal revoked.
A.D.	1914	Gandhi returns to India from South Africa.
A.D.	1919	Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms : Jalianwala Bagh Massacre at Amritsar (13th April).
A.D.	1920	Non-cooperation Movement in India started by Mahatma Gandhi.
A.D.	1930 to 1934	Civil Disobedience Movement—First Session of the Round Table Conference.
A.D.	1935	Government of India Act, 1935.
A.D.	1937	Inauguration of Provincial Autonomy. Congress Ministries in majority of Provinces.
A.D.	1942	Cripps Mission—Quit India Movement.
A.D.	1946	Cabinet Mission Plan—Interim Government with Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister.
A.D.	1947	Partition of India—India becomes independent. Kashmir attacked by Pakistan.

A.D. 1948	.. ..	Martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi (January 30)—India appeals to United Nations to stop aggression by Pakistan in Kashmir (January 2).
A.D. 1949	.. ..	India's New Constitution passed into law.
A.D. 1950	.. ..	India becomes Republic (26th January).
A.D. 1952	.. ..	First general election in independent India.

GENERAL SURVEY.

Indus Civilization

Recent researches and the excavations carried out in 1921 at Mohenjo-daro in Sind and Harappa in the Punjab have taken us back to what is now being called the "Indus Valley Civilization" which flourished between 3000 and 1500 B. C. The centres of this civilization were in well-planned cities having elaborate systems of drainage, commodious and comfortable houses, granaries, public baths and places of worship. The use of cotton was known. Wheat and barley crops were raised and domestic animals kept. There were pottery-makers, carpenters, black-smiths, stone-cutters, jewellers, ivory-cutters, all practising a highly developed art. Trade was at a high pitch and commerce was conducted between distant regions. The material prosperity of the people left nothing to be desired.

How this great civilization disappeared is still a matter of research though some scholars have put the theory that the Aryans who appeared in the Indus Valley with military equipment brought about its destruction.

Vedic Civilization

Races of the same stock which were called the Aryan stock migrated in distant ages from Central Asia to establish themselves in the west in the sub-continent of Europe, and in the south in the sub-continent of India. Doubts are still attached as to the precise places whence these immigrants came and how they absorbed themselves in their new regions. In the case of India these Aryan invaders intermingled with the pre-Aryan inhabitants. The infiltration of the Aryans took place over a long span of time, which, however, has not yet been definitely established. One view is that the Aryan settlement in the area we now call the Punjab was completed by the middle of the second millennium B. C.

Civilization of almost equal antiquity in certain other parts of the world, particularly the ancient river-valley civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia have passed completely away and so have the ancient civilizations of our own country. But in the case of India, there has remained on until today unchanged concepts of the outlook on life and of social tradition with characteristics of its own. The rules of life laid down in the ancient Vedas still run through the lives and the thoughts of the greater part of the population of India "with a persistence and authority undreamed of in the western world".*

All the same, the migration of the Aryans is a matter of conjecture and nothing definite has yet been established.

The Rigveda was composed while the Aryans were still in the Punjab. Scholars differ about the age of the treatise. Tilak and Jacobi have, on astronomical grounds, suggested 6000 and 4000 B. C. respectively ; Max Muller would go only up to about 1000 B. C. as the period when the Rigveda was composed.

*Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, 1930, Volume I, Survey.

During the Rigveda, society was grouped with families (Kulas— कुल) which in their turn grew into larger units to form distinct units, a community mainly rural in nature. There was some sort of rough classification into three categories, viz., the nobles and warriors, priests and saints, artisans and cultivators. Such a division had been coming on from the time of the original inhabitants of the country, namely, the Dravidians and the pre-Dravidians. During the age of Rigveda, farming was done in a skilful manner, the art of domesticating animals was fully developed, trade was flourishing with knowledge of maritime navigation. The religious practices consisted of worship of the powers of nature, sacrificial rituals in the form of performance of yajnas.

With the expansion of the Aryans over North India, which was completed by 1000 B. C., came the later Vedas—the books known as the Brahmanas, followed by the Upnishads during the next 500 years. Marked changes took place in the sphere of politics, society and religion. In the social organisation the caste system was strengthened and the original inhabitants were assimilated in the social structure. The beginnings of the story of Mahabharat are traced to this period.

Jainism and Buddhism

We then come to the next stage when about the middle of the 6th century B. C., two new faiths were founded : Jainism by Lord Mahavir and Buddhism by Lord Buddha.

These movements were a sort of reactions against the traditional religion of the Aryans which in the course of time had fallen into abuse in the form of beliefs in superstitions, spirits, incantations and witchcraft coupled with great stress on the sacrificial side. The two creeds of Jainism and Buddhism wholly rejected the authority of the Vedas and absolutely condemned animal sacrifice, though both shared the Vedic theory of the trans-migration of souls.

Jainism laid stress on the unity of the universality of life and held that even inanimate objects were endowed with consciousness or soul. The aim of life was defined as the development of all the good and latent qualities of the human soul. Intermediation and forgiveness as the attributes of a divine master were unacceptable to the Jains, for Jainism was indifferent to God as understood in the other religions. Mahavir carried the doctrine of non-violence to the limit, prescribing asceticism for salvation. He emphasized the point that it was the soul which must bear the consequences of its *karma* and must seek its salvation therefrom through several births.

Buddhism too was a revolt against the excesses which had crept in the traditional Vedic religion. But Buddha advised the middle path between the Vedas and the Jainism and discouraged all mortification of the flesh as much as indulgence in sensual pleasure.

As one of the greatest thinkers, Buddha drew out a scientific plan of life and behaviour, propounding four " TRUTHS " :

(*a*) that suffering is inseparable from existence ;

(*b*) that suffering is born out of desire and unfulfilled desires lead to rebirth ;

(*c*) that rebirth ceases with cessation of desires and when that happens, the highest good NIRVAN is attained ; and

(*d*) that the way to get rid of desire is to practise purity in deed, word and thought and the observance of the ten commands and the pursuit of the EIGHTFOLD PATH.

He then proceeded to define the ten commands which included abstention from doing evil things, e.g. killing, stealing,

telling lies, speaking ill of others, profane language, covetousness and hatred. Acquisition of knowledge was also stressed. As for the "Eightfold Path", this comprised eight rightful things, viz., right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right means of livelihood, right execution, right remembrance and right meditation.

Foreign Invasions :

Magadh Kingdom :

Chandra Gupta Maurya and Ashok

The first invasion of India which has been historically established took place about 518 B.C. when the Persian Emperor Darius annexed portions of the Indus Valley to his empire. The conquered territories were famous for their riches. The imperial army of Persia included an Indian contingent and this contingent aided the Persian imperial army in its attack on Greece in 480 B.C. But the Persian conquest of the Indus territories was short-lived and within a few generations it came to an end. Persian culture, however, left its mark on India. Simultaneously, Indian ideas of religion and civilization found their way round the East Mediterranean.

During this time, the Nanda dynasty with its headquarters in Magadh began to grow in power and was, as a result of foreign threats, able to unite the country into a single state in North India with a considerable part of the south included in it. It was at this time that Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 B.C. The conqueror could not make much headway in India and retreated after stiff resistance.

The Nanda dynasty was replaced by a new dynasty founded by Chandra Gupta Maurya, with whom a new national movement started. He was a powerful monarch and had for his Minister, the famous Chanakya or Kautilya who is recognised as the author of the great Artha Shastra. This book is the first treatise on political theory and practice and is held, even to this day, as a learned work. Chandra Gupta soon became master of North India and by defeating Seleucus, the General, who succeeded Alexander, made him surrender in 305 B.C. the provinces of Kabul, Kandhar and Baluchistan. During Chandra Gupta's time, India attained great heights in fine arts, military organization and the art of government.

Ashok, the grand-son of Chandra Gupta Maurya, completed whatever was left of the task of his grand-father and won for himself a name amongst the great rulers and organisers. He went to war in Kalinga after some years of his accession, but was disturbed in the peace of his mind. It was then that the influence of Buddha played on him and he found solace in the tenets of non-violence and the "Middle Path" taught by that great preceptor. He was so much at one with the teachings of the Lord that he made it his mission to propagate humanism and avoidance of war. In India, the creed of Buddha, which was previously more of a theoretical sect, became a living force. His missionaries spread to the length and breadth of his empire. Foreign countries were also covered and the ambassadors of the new thought were preaching their gospel in Central Asia, Ceylon and Greece. To propagate his message of love and light. he had inscriptions written on stone pillars which were erected throughout his kingdom. These pillars are still regarded as pieces of rare excellence.

On Ashoka's death, the country was left in disruption as none of his successors could take charge of such a far-flung kingdom and maintain it effectively. There were internal revolts from chieftains and local Governors and also foreign invasions.

Foreign Invasions again :

The Sungas—The Kalingas

The internal weakness to which we have referred tempted the foreigners again to

profit by incursions into India. Amongst these mention may be made of the Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians and the Yueh-chis who, in turn, came and settled in parts of the country. Resistance was organised under the leadership mainly of the Sungas and the Kalingas but the incomers could not be entirely expelled.

The foreign races had their influence on Indian civilization, particularly religion and arts. But the Indian way of life had also its influence on foreigners and in this way a sort of mixed civilization came into being. Christianity also came to India during this period and the first Indian church was founded in the first century A. D.

The Greek influence on India had its effect on Indian trade and commerce. Indian traders carried their arts and science to Alexandria. Indian embassies were also established in Rome and elsewhere. Exports from India were greater than imports, so that large payments in gold were received. The main exports were spices, steel, ivory and cotton goods, variety of medicinal plants, furs and gems.

The period of which we are speaking extends for about 500 years between 200 B.C. and A.D. 300.

Foreign influences on India gave rise to a sort of renaissance in which the basic concept of Aryan culture was, of course, maintained. Prakrit language was replaced by Sanskrit. The period also saw the production of master-pieces of learning such as the Manu Smriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, the Sutras and the Mimansas, to mention a few. The literature of Sankhya Yoga and Vedanta also flourished and some of the Puranas too came to be written. But the most notable addition was the Bhagwad Gita which was separated from the voluminous Mahabharat and given its own entity. Buddhist art also did not lag behind in attaining a high degree of accomplishment.

The Gupta Period

We now arrive at what is accepted by all historians as the golden period of Indian history. This was the age of the Gupta dynasty of Pataliputra. In A.D. 400, the Gupta Kings, who were able administrators and capable generals, united a large part of North India. Samudra Gupta consolidated the country in the north and also gave attention to the south. His son Chandra Gupta II, Vikramaditya, threw out the foreigners out of India and advanced even beyond the Indus. The later Guptas, notably Skanda Gupta, Yasho Dharman and Baladitya, successfully met the invasions of the Huns. Samudra Gupta himself had, apart from territorial consolidation, acquired accomplishments in fine arts too. The view is held by some historians that Kalidas belonged to the age of the Guptas. There was a cultural revival on an unprecedented scale, and literature, art and science were greatly developed. The two great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, were finally edited during this period; the major portion of the Puranas was also completed. Painting and sculpture almost reached perfection. Some of the famous paintings of Ajanta belong to this period and so also the sculptures of Sarnath and Mathura. The art of coinage and metallurgy was at its zenith—the iron pillar at Mehrauli near Delhi is the finest extant specimen of the art of metallurgy at that time.

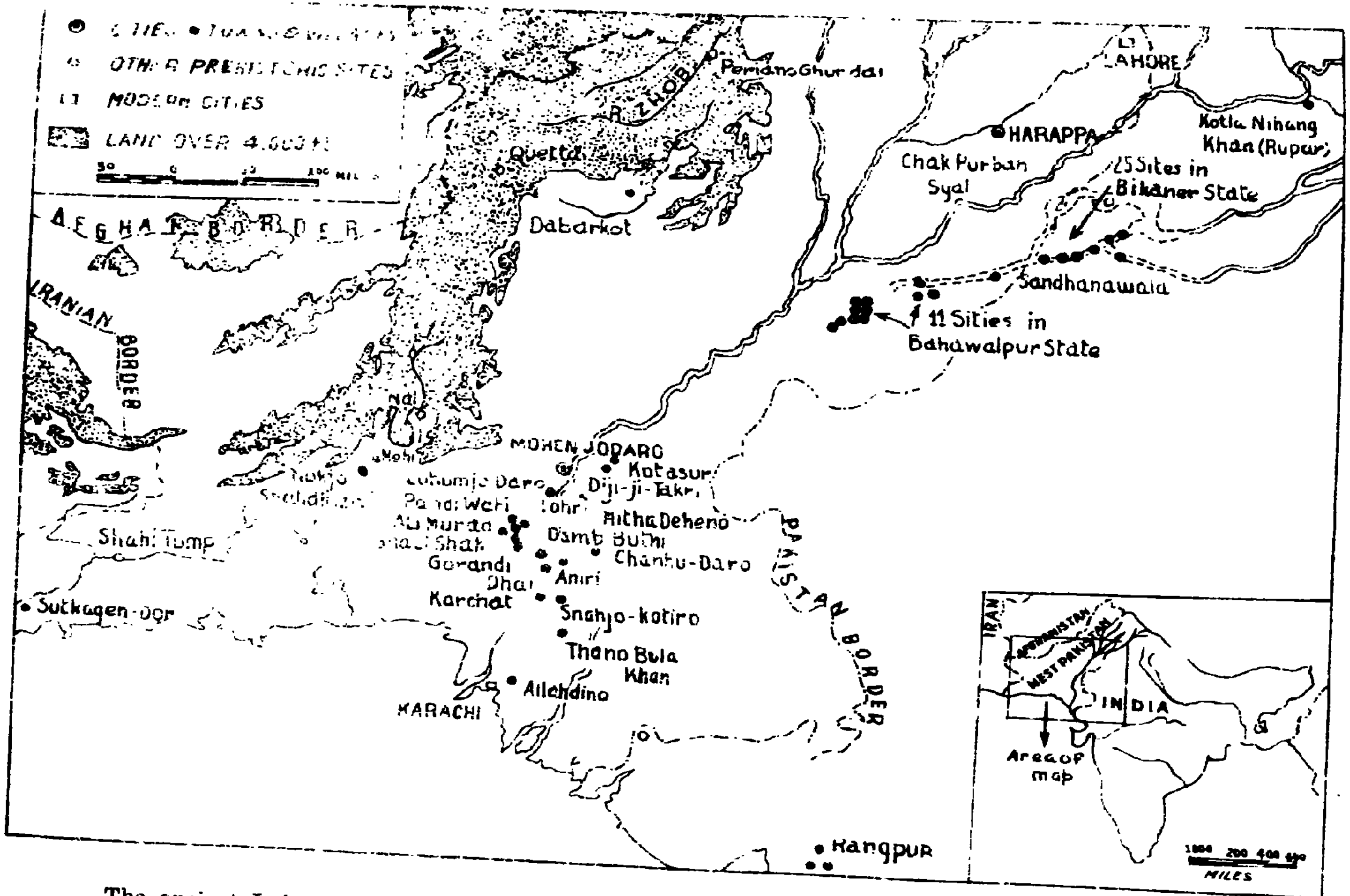
The culture of India was not confined to the boundaries of the country. Indian ideas of life and philosophy which had even previously reached foreign lands received great stimulus during this period, with the foundation of Hindu colonies and kingdoms in South-East Asia.

Fall of Gupta Empire :

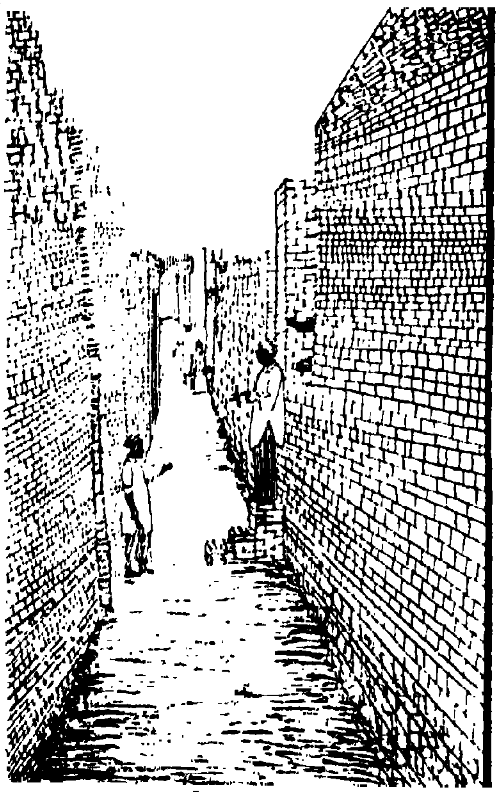
Harsh Vardhan and subsequent disintegration

The period between A.D. 500 and 1200 was characterised by disunity and dissension

I N D U S   V A L L E Y   C I V I L I Z A T I O N



The ancient Indus valley civilization stretched for a distance of a thousand miles from the foot of the Simla Hills up to the coast of the Arabian Sea. Two principal cities of this far-flung civilization were Mohenjodaro (Sind) and Harappa (Punjab). There is an astonishing measure of uniformity in the principal features of this civilization which was marked by a deep-rooted civic discipline. The citizens lived according to a balanced pattern of life and thought.



NARROW LANE, MOHENJO-DARO

The city of Mohenjo-daro was divided into blocks bounded by straight streets 30 feet wide. The blocks were sub-divided by lanes, and both lanes and streets carried brick-lined drains equipped with manholes to facilitate cleaning. The houses were of court-yard plan, with brick staircases to upper storeys or flat roofs.

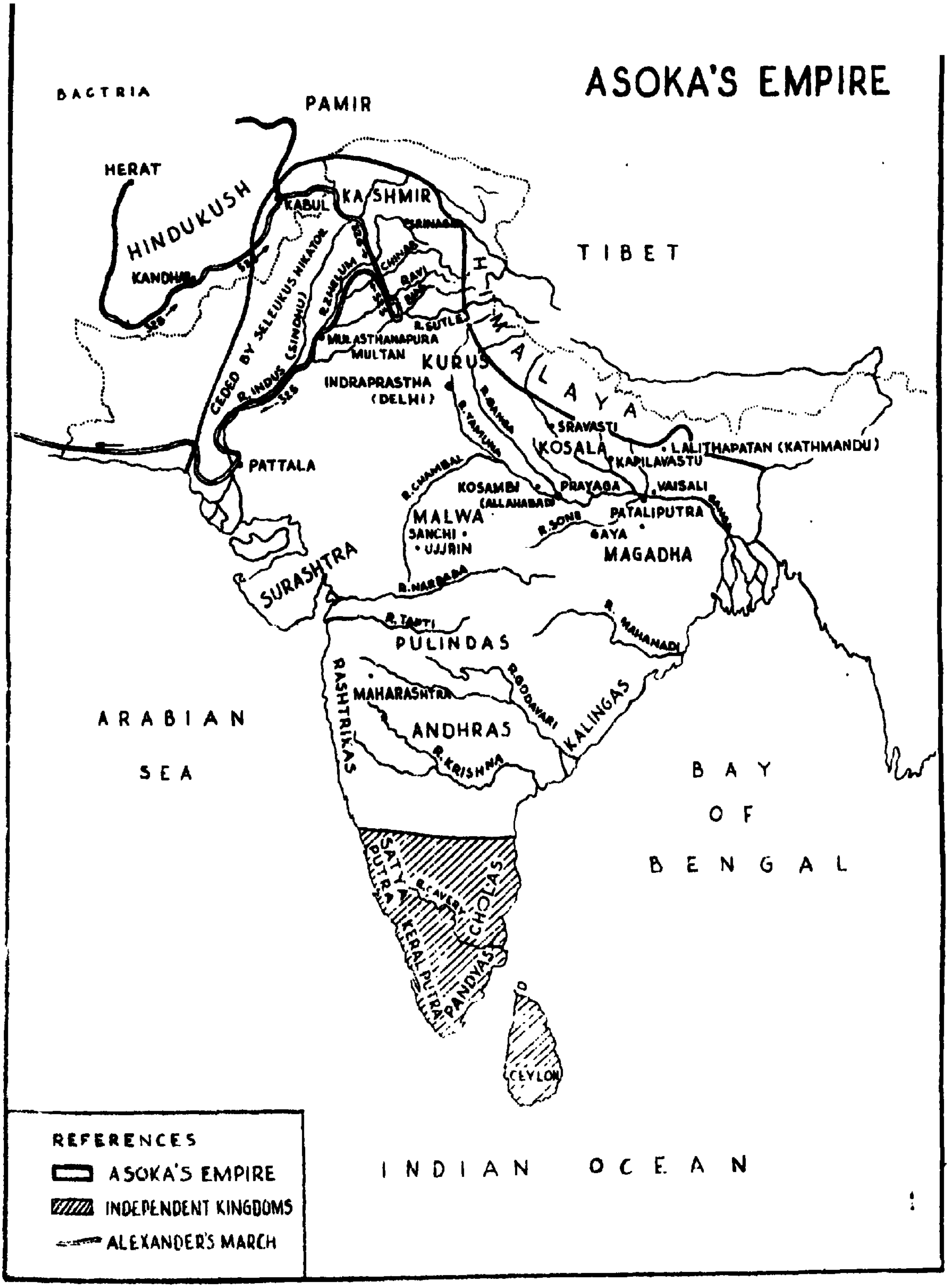
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WOMAN AND CHILD, AJANTA

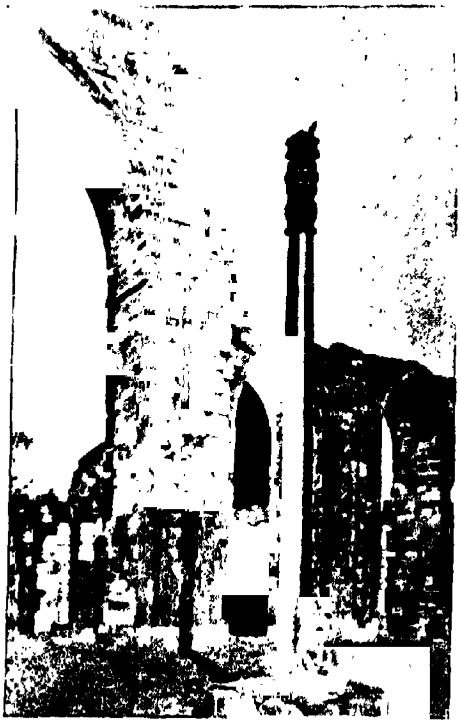
The finest of the caves of Ajanta were done during the Gupta period—A.D. 320 to 480 the golden age of Indian art. The Ajanta paintings "represent the climax to which genuine Indian art has attained. Everything in these pictures, from the composition as a whole to the smallest pearl or flower, testifies to the depth of insight coupled with the greatest technical skill"—Axel Jarl, noted Danish artist

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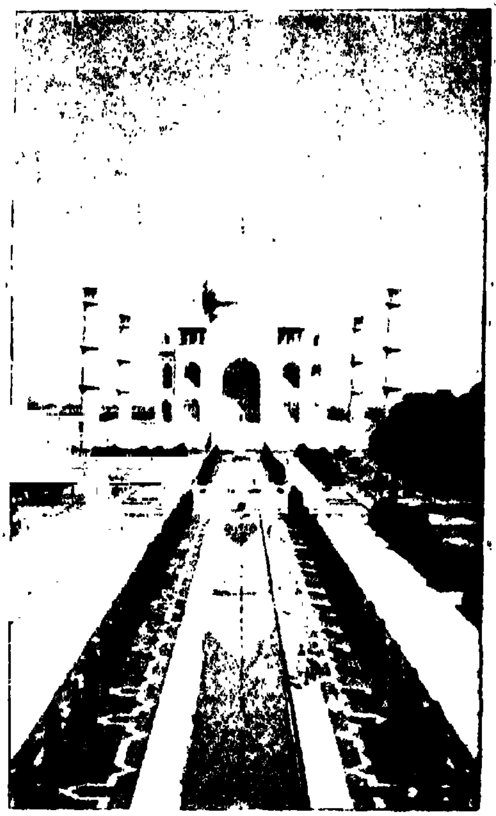
Asoka, who reigned from 273 to 232 B. C., is the first known Indian sovereign who created a unified empire. Save for a few Tamil states in the extreme south, the whole of India proper, together with Kashmir and Nepal, were under his rule either directly or through viceroys.



IRON PILLAR, DELHI

Engineers have not yet been able to answer the question how was it possible, 1,500 years ago, to forge such an immense piece of iron, and how could it be made absolutely rustless. Standing before the mosque Kuwwat-ul-Islam (Might of Islam) at Mehrauli, Delhi, the pillar carries a Sanskrit inscription marking it as a memorial erected by King Chandra when he conquered Bengal. On its capital is the effigy of *Garuda*, the "prince of birds", which suggests that originally there was a temple of Lord Vishnu before which the pillar stood.

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THE POEM IN STONE

"No building in India has so often been drawn and photographed as this", the Taj Mahal. "The monument conveys a high idea of the task and skill of the Indian architects of that age". So wrote JAMES FERGUSSON more than two generations ago. Commenced in 1630 it took 22 years to complete at a cost of two to three crores of rupees. The Emperor Shahjahan constructed it for the interment of the remains of his consort who died at the birth of her fourteenth child. When this mausoleum was being built in India, the architects of cathedrals in Germany had to leave their work unfinished, and Central Europe had sunk into misery and poverty—a most pitiable synchronism in history.

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following the fall of the Gupta dynasty. Before the disintegration started, Harsh Vardhan (A.D. 606—647)—a powerful king —was on the throne of India, with his seat at Kannauj, though he had no control of the southern regions. Harsh Vardhan was himself a scholar and a patron of learning and his philanthropy and toleration are well known. The celebrated historian Ban Bhatt has written an interesting account of his reign. The famous Chinese traveller, Hiuen-Tsang, visited India during this period. After Harsh Vardhan, there ceased to be any central power in the North as also in the South. There were contests for supremacy between several dynasties without any conclusive result.

With political instability, art and culture began to decline but even in this situation the declining art left its pieces of architecture at Khajuraho and elsewhere.

In the Southern regions, however, the position was retrieved during the age of the Imperial Cholas (A.D. 850—1200) which was the golden age of Tamil culture. The finest specimens of temples, art and architecture of Southern India are attributed to this period. In religion and literature great strides were made. The systems of Vedanta philosophy were developed and some great figures in Southern literature flourished.

With this age ended the spirit of ancient India and foundations were laid for a new stage in Indian history with the advent of political Islam in the country.

Muslim Invasions:

Prithvi Raj and Jai Chand.

It was in A.D. 711 that the Arabs invaded India, establishing themselves in Sind and Multan. Earlier, India had trade relations with the Arab world with interchange of arts and science. The kings of Kannauj and Chittor prevented the further progress of the invaders. But between 1000 and 1026, Mahmood of Ghazni several times attacked India, but left no marks of permanent conquest. The country was, however, completely weakened, militarily and economically. This facilitated the attacks of Mohammad Ghori, 160 years afterwards. There were at that time internal disputes between the rulers of India, particularly between Prithvi Raj, who was holding the throne of Delhi, and Jai Chand, the ruler of a large part of the country with his seat at Kannauj. A great battle was fought at Thaneshwar with Mohammad Ghori in 1192 resulting in his decisive victory over Prithvi Raj. Taken prisoner, Prithvi Raj was later put to death. But Mohammad Ghori had no intention of sitting on the throne of Delhi. So he appointed his General—Qutbuddin—as his Viceroy and thus in 1206 Muslim rule was established in North India.

Sultanate Period (1206—1526)

Qutbuddin had originally been a slave, so his dynasty came to be known as the Slave Dynasty of Delhi. It was followed by the Khiljis, the Tughlaks, the Syeds and the Lodis. The regime of these dynasties beginning with the Slave Dynasty is known as the Sultanate Period of Indian history.

Iltutmish and Balban of the Slave Dynasty consolidated their rule over North India. Then came the Khilji dynasty in 1290. Sultan Alauddin Khilji of this dynasty was the first Muslim who carried arms to the South in 1311. He over-ran Devagiri, Warangal, Dwarasamudra and Madura. On the extinction of the Khilji dynasty came the Tughlaks amongst whom the greatest monarch was Mohammad Tughlak. With his death disintegration set in rapidly and independent kingdoms were founded.

During this period the Rajputs continued their heroic resistance against the sway of the Muslim rulers for a period of 400 years. In the South, the Vijaynagar kingdom reasserted itself and continued to hold its own against the Sultans for over 200 years from 1336.

The Muslim conquest, though foreign in origin, did not mark any violent change in the Indian way of life. The Muslims had made India their homeland and did not owe allegiance to any outside country. After battles had been fought and peace restored, there came into being mutual harmony and toleration between the conquerors and the conquered. There was a blending of Indian and Islamic traditions which was marked in architecture particularly and in other fine arts in general. In the south traditional Indian architecture, however, continued to prevail and can still be seen in the edifices raised during the period. Kabir, Ramanand, Namadeo, Gyaneshwar, Mirabai, Nanak, Chandi Das and Vidyapati Thakur are the famous names who contributed to the Bhakti movement and to Indian literature connected with it. Music and painting also flourished.

Moghals (1526—1707)

Babar, the founder of the Moghal dynasty won the battle of Panipat against Sultan Ibrahim Lodi in 1526. His successors, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb have left their permanent marks on history and culture. Almost the whole of India from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari gradually came under their sway. During the time of Akbar the Great, who, besides being a soldier and statesman, was a patron of art and learning, fine arts received great impetus. The great literary figure Tulsi Das, flourished during the period. Akbar's buildings at Fatehpur-Sikri are an example of the blending of the Saracenic style of architecture, but above all his tolerance and catholicity in every branch of life were proverbial. He was regarded as a national monarch.

Jahangir and Shahjahan, able rulers, also made their contribution to art and literature and to the blending of a harmonious social life amongst the various communities. Shahjahan was the greatest builder amongst the rulers of India. One of the seven wonders of the world—the Taj Mahal—was built by him and so also the famous Peacock throne. With Aurangzeb the Moghal empire reached the finality of its territorial expansion. He conquered the Muslim kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkunda in the South and his rule extended right up to the river Kaveri. With his death, the empire rapidly declined bringing in its wake the Marathas and the Sikhs and finally the British found their way to establish their own empire.

Marathas and Sikhs (1627—1818)

The successors of Aurangzeb were weak and inefficient. During this period, India was subjected to loot and devastation by Nadir Shah and his successor, Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Marathas grew in power after being organised by Shivaji (1627—80). The Peshwas who were the political successors of Shivaji extended their dominions both in the south and in the north with their headquarters at Poona. They controlled the titular Moghal kings of Delhi and under their authority collected chauth in the territories which formerly belonged to the Delhi throne. They had established themselves on good foundations to build up a national monarchy. It was during this supremacy of the Peshwas that Ahmad Shah Abdali made his last and the most powerful attack on India and the third great battle of Panipat was fought in 1761 between the Marathas and the Abdali Shah. The Marathas lost heavily, but Abdali did not desire to dominate all India. He left the country as a dejected conqueror. Under the great Mahadaji Scindia and the Peshwa Madhav Rao I, the Marathas were able to re-establish the authority which they had lost by the defeat at Panipat. They would have succeeded in formally establishing a strong central national government but for the strength which the East India Company had been gaining in India, coupled with internal disputes among the Marathas. These dissensions occurred following the death in 1772 of Madhav Rao I, the greatest Peshwa and one of the most remarkable rulers in history who died of a long and severe illness at the young age of 28.

The religious revival of the 15th and the 16th centuries brought into existence, under the leadership of Guru Nanak, the powerful Sikh community in the Punjab. It started as a religious sect but was soon transformed into a military brotherhood under Guru Govind Singh. The Sikhs forged themselves into a united and powerful community as a result of the persecution at the hands of the intolerant Aurangzeb. They were also able to increase their military strength and to improve their financial resources in the wake of the disorder and confusion which followed the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali. Thus, the Sikhs became a powerful factor in the political set-up of the country, achieving great success under the famous Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

The British

The East India Company (1612—1858)

So long India had been the subject of invasions by foreign kings and generals through the northern land route. But tales of the wealth and prosperity of the country had reached the ears of European nations and, taking the sea route, they set out to have a share in Indian resources. The first European nation to set foot on Indian soil was a party of Portuguese adventurers under the leadership of Vasco do Gama who set anchor at Surat in May 1498. Then followed other nations, the Dutch, the Danes, the French and the English, all aiming to secure commercial relations with India. Eventually, the other nations were eliminated. The French, with whom the English had a grim struggle, were defeated leaving the British as the sole European nation trading with India and with establishments on Indian soil. This was in 1760 when the French were finally done up at the battle of Wandiwash. Gradually, the British began to acquire territorial power and with the defeat of the Bengal Nawab Sirajuddaula at Plassey in 1757, Clive laid solid foundations of British political power in India.

The East India Company extended its sway over the whole of the Gangetic plain as far as Kanpur within twenty years of the victory at Plassey. The Marathas were finally liquidated in 1818 when Baji Rao, the last Peshwa, made over his kingdom to the British in return for an annual pension of 8 lakhs. For some time Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan had been harassing the British but with the fall of Tipu Sultan at the battle of Seringapatam in 1799 was settled the British supremacy almost completely in the South.

By 1849, the Sikhs had also been subjugated and in 1852 lower Burma came under British suzerainty. These territorial acquisitions, coupled with subsidiary alliances with the rulers of the Indian States who had adopted the easier course of advantage, completed the British control over India. But while the Company's government was popular in certain respects, it was unpopular in several others and civil rebellion and military mutinies, which occurred every now and then, were the symptoms of Indian disaffection towards this new power.

The last but one Governor-General of the Company, Lord Dalhousie, aggravated the discontent by his Doctrine of Lapse applied to Indian princes and also of dispossession of big land-holders, particularly in Avadh. Lord Canning, who succeeded the outgoing Governor-General in 1856, would by his generous government have smothered Indian feelings, but before he could formally apply himself to his work the great revolt of 1857 broke out resulting in the liquidation of the East India Company and the assumption of direct rule by the Crown of England in 1858.

Under the British Crown (1858—1947)

After the "mutiny" had been practically suppressed, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1858, by which the East India Company was superseded and the British territories became vested in the English Crown which was to rule the

country directly through Parliament and officers appointed by the Crown. Queen Victoria then issued her famous proclamation to the princes and the people of India.

After the assumption of direct rule by the Crown, the territories which had been conquered and annexed by the East India Company and subsequently by the Crown in India were, in course of time, formed into provinces under the administration of Governors or Lieutenant Governors, and, in the case of comparatively smaller areas, in the charge of Chief Commissioners. At the same time the Indian States which had accepted the protection of the British were left to the rule of the Princes, the British Crown, as the paramount power, retaining the authority of over-all supervision. Control over the princely States was exercised directly by the Governor-General in his capacity of Viceroy or Crown Representative, and this position continued right up to the achievement of Independence.

India, under the British Crown, made progress materially. Railways began to be constructed and telegraph lines were extended. Cotton mills were started with steam power which had now been introduced into India. With the opening of the Suez Canal the distance between India and England was greatly reduced. English was introduced as the medium of instruction in educational institutions. Local self-governing institutions were established. Social reforms were also undertaken. But with all these things, good as they were in their own way, indigenous industries and handicrafts suffered a great set-back. This was because the British had to bring in their piece-goods into India and that could not be done until Indian handicrafts were suppressed. This was the new order of things.

During the first fifty years of Crown administration, there were great revivals in social, religious and political spheres. There came into being an organization in Bengal known as the Brahmo Samaj which advocated a programme of social reform and the adoption of constitutional methods for political matters. In Maharashtra, Justice Mahadev Ranade founded the Prarthana Samaj on the lines of the Brahmo Samaj. These organizations were the logical offshoots of the western impact on the Indian ways of life and thought.

Different in outlook from these organizations were founded the Arya Samaj by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824—83) and the mission founded by Swami Ram Krishna Paramhansa (1834—86) and known after his name. The Arya Samaj worked against caste restrictions, child-marriage, prohibition of sea voyage; at the same time it encouraged education amongst women and the re-marriage of widows. The Ram Krishna Mission preached faith in the inherent truth of all religions, including Islam and Christianity. Swami Ram Krishna's great disciple, Swami Vivekanand (1863—1902) spread the teachings of Ram Krishna throughout India. He also carried the mission of India to foreign countries notably England and the United States of America.

It was not long after the "Mutiny" that the spirit of freedom began to recur. The movement for self-government was started and in 1885 the Indian National Congress was founded, ironical as it may seem, by a British civilian, Mr. Allen O. Hume. The 1880's saw the growth of this movement under the leadership of Hume, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Dadabhai Naoroji, Pheroz Shah Mehta, to mention only a few of the great personalities of the period. These were succeeded by Lokmanya Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, and the versatile Annie Besant. The partition of Bengal, undertaken during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, gave a great impetus to the national movement and there came in its wake constitutional agitation, economic boycott and terrorism. The British then began to apprehend real danger to their

Indian empire. Then came the first World War in which India also took a prominent part in the expectation of receiving self-government. The reforms introduced in the Government of India, after the close of the war, by the Government of India Act, 1919, were based on the announced policy of the British Government for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and for the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire.*

These reforms were, however, half-hearted measures and failed to satisfy Indian aspirations. It was at this moment that Mahatma Gandhi, who had to his credit outstanding political work for Indians in South Africa, appeared on the scene. He introduced his first non-violent technique in Indian politics in the form of the non-co-operation movement of 1920. This was followed by other movements of a similar character under different names until, as a result of the recommendations of the Simon Commission, the reforms of 1935 embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935 were brought into being in April 1937. The Congress, while opposed to the scheme of a Federation of India with the association of princely States as provided for in that Act, decided to try the reforms in the provinces. As a result of the sweeping victory of the Congress at the polls, the Congress formed governments in the various provinces and ran them with credit and success.

The Congress had not long been in office in the provinces when the Second World War broke out in 1939. Indian opinion as represented by the Congress was against India being a party to this conflict, but the British Cabinet had already declared India to be at war with the Germans. Then followed the Civil Disobedience and the "Quit India" movements under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. On the military side, Neta Subhas Chandra Bose managed to escape from confinement and raised the Indian National Army in South East Asia. During the progress of the war, the British Cabinet made strenuous efforts to obtain the goodwill of India in the prosecution of war and for this purpose sent Missions to India, first under the leadership of the renowned British statesman and member of the British Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps, and later with Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, at the head of another Mission.

Eventually, the British decided to hand over complete sovereign power to Indian hands and for this purpose they appointed one of the greatest figures of modern England, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, to the Viceroyalty of India. He was to finalize the scheme and to arrange for the actual transfer of sovereignty. The British people and their Parliament were very sincere about Indian aspirations and little time was taken by Parliament in passing the Indian Independence Act, 1947, by virtue of which, on August 15, 1947, India attained the position of a sovereign Dominion with right to frame her own Constitution. At the same time came into being another Dominion under the name of Pakistan.

With the enforcement of the Independence Act, there lapsed the suzerainty of the British Crown over the Indian Princes and there lapsed also all treaties between the Crown and the Rulers of Indian States. In the result, the British paramountcy over the Indian States ceased and they became an integral part of the country.

Mahatma Gandhi declined any office under the new dispensation and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had been in the Interim Indian Cabinet which had been formed pending

*cf. the preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919.

the actual transfer of power, became, on August 15, 1947, the first Prime Minister of Independent India. No time was lost to set-up a Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution for free India with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the President of that Assembly.

Sovereignty

After about two years of deliberations, the Constitution of India saw its birth on January 26, 1950, securing to the people of India, justice, liberty and equality and aiming to promote among the citizens fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation.* On that historic day was inaugurated the Sovereign Republic of India with feelings of unprecedented rejoicing in every home and hearth throughout the length and breadth of India. The veteran statesman and patriot, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was sworn in as the first President of the Republic and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister, with a team of seasoned statesmen as associates in the Cabinet of India. Mahatma Gandhi's political mission was now fulfilled.

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES.

In her long and chequered history it had been the ambition of rulers from ancient times to unite India into a political entity under a central paramount power. But this ambition largely remained unfulfilled, though several of the rulers of the old were able to attain it to a limited extent. It is said that only twice in the early history of India, political unity was nearly attained—first by Ashok in the third century B. C. and later by Samudra Gupta who, in the 4th century A. D. held sway over almost the whole of India from the Ganga to the Tamil country.

In early times the seat of paramount power was in Northern India, that is to say, the country north of the Narbada river. Southern India, that is the portion south of the Narbada remained almost secluded not only from the rest of India, but from the rest of the civilized world. The people there were populous and prosperous, of Dravidian stock, in no way inferior in culture to their Aryan compatriots in the north. It was only very rarely when sovereigns of the north led their armies to the south and even then these were no more than sporadic combats. For these reasons the knowledge of history of the southern kingdoms during the long period from 600 B. C. to A. D. 900 is meagre.

When speaking of the good things of British rule in India historians have given credit for the fact that it was the British who laid solid foundations for the complete unity of India which they achieved in 1818 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings when the Marathas, under Peshwa Baji Rao II, were defeated and their dominions incorporated in British territory.

But though India had been lacking in political unity, her social and cultural unity was remarkable. This unity is in keeping with the geographical entity of the country encircled by seas and mountains. The Indian civilization has features marking it out as separate from the civilizations of all the other regions of the world, but there is a peculiar oneness in the social, religious and intellectual aspects of the life of the people of our large sub-continent.

In spite of the countless vicissitudes through which the people of India have passed since the dawn of history, the men and women have preserved the basic concepts of a true and formidable spirit.

Our forefathers lost many a battle and lost many men. They have occasionally been over-powered by numerically inferior

*Preamble to the Constitution of India.

hordes : they lost their territories, they lost their wealth, but what they have not lost is their unconquerable spirit which is all that matters.

C. CULTURAL HERITAGE

As we have seen, India is the seat of the oldest civilization in the world, the Indus Valley civilization. The culture of India is vast and varied deriving itself from innumerable impacts of philosophy and religion, history and tradition. The influence of this culture has been so deep-rooted in the lives of our men and women that it has sustained the community in all the miseries and misfortunes through which the country has passed. At the same time the people have not been impervious to the good influence of new cultures, notably the Islamic culture. But there has been a harmonious synthesis of the basic factors of a varied cultural life and the marks of this composite culture can still be prominently seen in the lives and ways and the expression of even the illiterate men and women in rural India.

In his whirlwind tours of the country on the eve of the general elections for Provincial Assemblies in 1936-37, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was astonished by the impress of ancient times on some of the men and women he saw. Writing about them he says : "I looked at their faces and their figures and watched their movements. . . . Some times, as I was passing along a country road or through a village, I would start with surprise on seeing a fine type of a man or a beautiful woman who reminded me of some fresco of ancient times. And I wondered how the type endured and continued through ages, in spite of all the horror and misery that India had gone through." He saw poverty and crushed lives and the many evils arising from that cause. There was a pervading spirit of resignation, an attitude to accept things as they were. "But there was", he adds, "also a mellowness and a gentleness, the cultural heritage of thousands of years which no amount of misfortune had been able to rub off".*

While on this subject, it should also be added that it is a misconception to suppose that in our ancient culture and traditions there was lack of nationalism. "The foundations of nationalism were", writes Dr. Radha Kumud Mukerjee, "well and truly laid in the very earliest period of our history in the people's possession of a fixed and defined territory followed by their gradual realization of it as their common motherland, claiming their homage and service. This realization was consciously stimulated by an appropriate literature, religious as well as secular, which evoked a widespread feeling of reverence for the country".† If the famous lines of Sir Walter Scott :

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land,"

are a lofty expression of the patriotic urge in English literature, an equally ennobling idea has been versified in the well-known lines :

जननी जन्मभूमिश्च
स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।

Foreign eulogy

The famous German scholar and orientalist, Professor Maxmuller spoke thus about India's greatness in a lecture delivered in 1882 at the University of Cambridge : "If we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature

*Discovery of India, pp. 45 46.

†Nationalism in Indian Culture, p. 96.

can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one semitic race, the Jewish, may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human a life, not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

We have also the great Romain Rolland writing in our own time about the greatness of India : "If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India."

Speaking in the House of Commons while introducing the Bill for the transfer from the East India Company to the Crown of the government of Her Majesty's Indian Dominions, Prime Minister Lord Palmerston paid this tribute to the antiquity of the Indian people : "It is perhaps one of the most extraordinary facts in the history of mankind that these British Islands should have acquired such an extensive dominion in a remote part of the globe as that which we exercise over the continent of India. It is indeed remarkable that those regions in which science and art may be said to have first dawned upon mankind should now be subject to the rule of a people inhabiting islands which, at a time when these eastern regions enjoyed as high a civilization and as great prosperity as that age could offer, were in a state of utter barbarism."*

D. INDIAN WOMANHOOD

We may have lost the goodness of our culture, the lofty traditions of our ancient civilization ; we may have forgotten our superior knowledge of arts and sciences ; we may even have lost the high morals of our forefathers, but there is one thing which we have not lost and which is still our most valuable asset. This is the spirit of Indian womanhood and all the ideals that are associated with it. This is the one redeeming feature of our society and the master-cure for all the maladies found in our midst. Our mothers, sisters and daughters still cherish the ideals of ancient womanhood and live up to them.

India's pride in her women is so well founded and is so universally known as to make it superfluous to dwell on it at any length. All that need be mentioned are a few stray instances of the purity, the chivalry and the devotion to high ideals of the daughters of our country—ideals which have placed Indian womanhood on the highest pedestal.

We have the virtuous Savitri who would not change the choice she had made of her life-companion even when told by seers of the future that he was destined to die before a year was out. She remained steadfast to Satyavan, the son of a king in exile without any material possessions whatever ; he had only his moral fibre to recommend him to the choice of that undaunted lady. The story is long and we would content ourselves only by

*Viscount Palmerston, House of Commons, February 12, 1858.



CHAND BIBI OF BIJAPUR

(1547–99)

APART FROM HER SCHOLASTIC ATTAINMENTS, CHAND BIBI OCCUPIES A PLACE OF PRIDE IN INDIAN HISTORY AS A RULER OF MARKED ADMINISTRATIVE ABILITY COMBINED WITH MILITARY SKILL OF THE HIGHEST ORDER.

* * *



AHALYA BAI HOLKAR OF INDORE

(1735–95)

LEFT A WIDOW AT THE AGE OF 20, AHALYA BAI BECAME A REMARKABLE ADMINISTRATOR AND A DISTINGUISHED [illegible]. SIR JOHN MALCOLM, GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY, HAD NO HESITATION IN DESCRIBING HER AS "ONE OF THE PUREST AND MOST EXEMPLARY RULERS THAT EVER EXISTED."

* * *

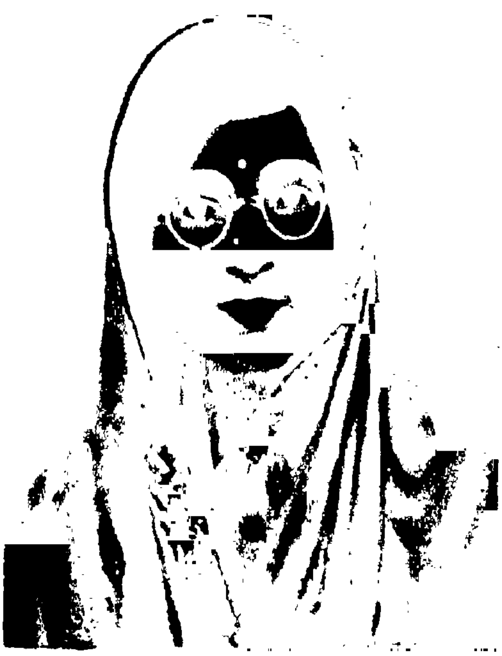


MIRA BAI

(An artist's impression)

FLOURISHING IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, MIRA BAI IS ONE OF THE FOREMOST EXPONENTS OF DEVOTIONAL POETRY AND OF *bhakti* CULT

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कमला नेहरू

कमला वर्षों मेरे सम्पर्क में रहीं। मेरी धारणा है कि उनसे अधिक सच्ची वीरांगना और धर्मपरायण महिला दूसरी नहीं हो सकती।

—महात्मा गान्धी

\+ + +

quoting her answer to the entreaties of her father to change her mind :

दीर्घायुरथवाल्पायुःसगुणो निर्गुणोऽपिवा ,
सकृद् वृतो मया भर्ता न द्वितीयं वृणोम्यहम् ।
मनसा निश्चयं कृत्वा ततो वाचाभिधीयते
क्रियते कर्मणा पश्चात् प्रमाणं मे मनस्ततः ॥*

We have the example of the mother Sita who, through all the adversities and misfortunes, never wavered in her faith in the goodness of Rama. When, by order of Rama, she was carried and left all alone in a lonely forest, her only request to the departing Lakshman was to convey the following message to Rama :

वाच्यस्त्वया मद्वचनात् स राजा
वह्नौ विशुद्धामपि यत्समक्षम् ।
मल्लोकलज्जापभयादहासीः
श्रुतस्य किं तत्सदृशं कुलस्य ॥†

—KALIDAS, *Raghuvansha*, 14—61.

Panna made the sacrifice of her infant son to save the infant Prince of Mewar. As a foster mother and nurse she had been entrusted with the care of Prince Udai Singh, the posthumous son of Maharana Sanga. One day she learnt that the usurper king of Mewar was coming at night to slay the Prince. She had no means of resistance but she was steadfast in her determination to save his life at any cost. She made secret arrangements to have the Prince taken away to a place of safety. When the usurper entered her room at night and enquired about Prince Udai, the faithful nurse pointed to the cradle where, in place of the Prince, she had placed her own son. Instantly, in her presence the child was killed. She held her mother's heart in restraint and let not a sob fall from her eyes or a shriek escape from her lips lest the murderer's suspicion be roused. The infant Prince was thus saved to become the ruler of Mewar in due course. The example of devotion and patriotism set by this humble lady in the 16th century is unparalleled in world history. She is remembered with veneration in every Indian house.

The women of Maharashtra have been particularly noted for their sagacity combined with piety and have, by the firmness of their character, exercised a healthy influence in the upper strata of Maharashtrian society. "The phenomenal success which the Peshwas attained in their careers is in no small measure due to the development of character and enterprise so rigidly enforced particularly by the ladies in the domestic life of the Peshwa's palace and its surroundings".‡ Of Maharashtrian ladies, the one who has left a permanent mark on Indian history and society is Ahalya Bai Holkar (1735-95). She was married to the heir-apparent of Malhar Rao Holkar of Indore, but became a widow at the age of 20. Malhar Rao and her only son died successively in 1766 and 1767 and Ahalya Bai succeeded to the administration which she carried on with great distinction till her death. A fitting tribute has been paid to her by Sir John Malcolm, who knew about Maratha affairs more than any other Englishman, in these words : "The success of Ahalya Bai in the internal administration of her dominions was altogether wonderful . . . . In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and most exemplary rulers that ever existed."

*Savitri said : Whether of long years or of short life endowed with virtues or without them, I have once chosen him as my lord, and cannot choose another now. First the mind is made up, then expression is given in words, then comes the action : my determination is unchangeable.

†As from me, ask the King (Rama) whether, having accepted before all my purity after the ordeal of the fire, his action in now giving me up on account of the fear of popular denouncement, is in conformity with the scriptures and his family traditions or against them.

‡Sardesai Vol. II, pp. 61-62.

Of the numerous works of public utility constructed by her, mention may be made of the road from Calcutta to Varanasi and the famous bathing ghat at Varanasi.

Princess Zebunnisa, the daughter of Aurangzeb, was a lady of great refinement and personal qualities. She lived up to a woman's age but died unmarried. Her lofty character is best illustrated by a small incident of her life. Aurangzeb had given her as a gift a precious Chinese mirror of great artistic beauty. One evening, sitting in her garden, the Princess asked her maid to fetch the mirror. After a while, the maid returned sobbing and terror-stricken. The Princess asked her the reason to which she replied :

ازقضا آئینۂ چینی شکست *

Whereupon the Princess observed with profound composure :

خوب شد اسباب خودبینی شکست †

Another woman ruler of remarkable capacity was Chand Bibi of Bijapur (1547—99). With her military genius and administrative skill were combined scholastic attainments. She had a deep knowledge of Arabic and Persian and fluently spoke several languages of the Deccan. Scholars received her patronage and foreigners her kindly help. Her end was tragic, but her greatness never in doubt. Lavish tributes have been paid to her by India's historians.

The Rajput ladies stand in a class by themselves for chivalry and fearlessness. There has also been a great saint among them, the celebrated Mira Bai who flourished in the 16th century As one of the foremost exponents of the Bhakti cult, she sang in praise of Lord Krishna in Brijbhasha mixed with Rajasthani. In the history of Indian thought Mira Bai occupies a sacred place for her deep devotion and her enchanting poetry. Her songs, coming out of her dedicated heart, are tender and inspiring. There is a controversy about the particulars of her birth and marriage, but according to Todd she was the Queen of Rana Kumbha of Mewar to whom she was wedded in 1513. She is said to be the authoress of Rag-Govind and Gita-Govind of Jayadeva. She is also credited with having erected a temple to Lord Krishna in Mewar. Much legend has grown round her name.

In the struggle of 1857 too, two great ladies had distinguished themselves—the Rani of Jhansi and Begum Hazrat Mahal of Lucknow. Their detailed account appears elsewhere in these pages.

Coming to our own times, mention need only be made of the remarkable part which Indian women played in the struggle for freedom. In Mahatma Gandhi's time, civil disobedience movement started in April 1930. After most of the menfolk had been put in jails and Government repression was at its height, the women of India, belonging to all classes of society, to poor and rich families, came out of their houses and continued the struggle with a determination which excited praise as well as wonder. In thousands, they defied lathi charges and their organizational capacity caused surprise even to the Government. Writing about them Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Discovery of India* says : "Never can I forget the thrill that came to us in Naini prison when news of this reached us, the enormous pride in the women of India that filled us. We could hardly talk about all this among ourselves for our hearts were full and our eyes were dim with tears."

*"By accident the Chinese looking-glass has been broken."
(In haste, the mirror had fallen down on the marble floor).

†"Very nice, indeed! The paraphernalia for looking into one's features in self-elation has been broken."

The learned author then goes on to refer to the "Resolution of Remembrance" which was passed at innumerable public meetings all over India on January 26, 1931, a day which was being observed for several years past as the anniversary of "India's Independence Day" which was yet to come. These meetings were held in spite of the Government ban and had been organized by Pandit Moti Lal Nehru from his sick bed in which he was to die ten days later. The part of the resolution which relates to the women of India has been quoted with just pride by the learned author :

"We record our homage and deep admiration for the womenhood of India, who, in the hour of peril for the motherland, forsook the shelter of their homes and, with unfailing courage and endurance, stood shoulder to shoulder in the front line of India's national army, to share with them the sacrifices and triumphs of the struggle . . . ."

We ought not to forget also the name of the great lady who died in February 1936 and whose name has been somewhat eclipsed in the turmoil of succeeding years. In the veil of obscurity, she silently suffered many vicissitudes in her life of devotion to a cause. She will ever be remembered as one of the most sincere workers, away from the limelight of publicity and public applause. This was the wholesome Kamala Nehru, the affectionate wife of our Prime Minister. She made her name particularly in her work at Allahabad during the Civil Disobedience Movement when every male worker was in jail. She carried on the movement in the city with the zeal of a fanatic and, though inexperienced, made up the deficiency by her fire and energy. In the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru : "Within a few months, she became the pride of Allahabad."

For a true tribute to her memory we need only turn to the second chapter of the *Discovery of India*. A few excerpts, which many a reader would remember, are reproduced here.

Writing about her at Badenweiler (Germany) where he was with the ailing Kamala, the author writes : "She became a symbol of Indian women, or of woman herself. Some times she grew curiously mixed up with my ideas of India, that land of ours which was so dear to us, with all her faults and weaknesses, and so elusive and full of mystery. I had been and was a most unsatisfactory person to marry. Kamala and I were unlike each other in some ways, and yet in some other ways very alike. We did not complement each other. Our very strength became a weakness in our relations to each other. There could either be complete understanding, a perfect union of minds, or difficulties. Neither of us could live a humdrum domestic life, accepting things as they were."

The author has then described an incident of great pathos which took place in 1934. He was at his father's house at Allahabad, the celebrated Anand Bhawan. The police came to arrest Pandit Nehru on a warrant from Calcutta. "Kamala went up to our room to collect some clothes for me. I followed her to say good-bye to her. Suddenly, she clung to me and, fainting, collapsed. This was unusual for her as we had trained ourselves to take this jail-going lightly and cheerfully and to make as little fuss about it as possible. Was it some premonition she had that this was our last more or less usual meeting ?"

Though she died at the prime of her life, things about Kamala would fill a book which is yet to be written. Her illness had been long and physical suffering acute, but till the end she remained steadfast and cheerful in her mental condition. She had now been taken to a sanitorium near Lausanne in Switzerland where the end came on a February morning. Her husband and daughter were at her side. For cremation, she was taken to the crematorium in Lausanne. "Within a few minutes that fair body and that lovely face, which used to smile so often and so well, were reduced to ashes. A small urn contained the mortal remains of one who had been so vital, so bright and so full of life."

CHAPTER THREE

EIGHTEEN FIFTY-SEVEN : ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

A. UNPRECEDENTED ATROCITIES

B. DRAMATIC NATURE OF EVENTS

C. IT LAID THE FOUNDATION OF FUTURE INDEPENDENCE

"And much it grieved my heart to think,
What man has made of man."

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A. UNPRECEDENTED ATROCITIES

AN Indian boy leading a blind and aged man approached a British military officer and throwing himself at the latter's feet asked for protection. The officer drew his revolver and snapped it at the boy's head. Again he pulled the trigger—again the cap missed; again he pulled and once more the weapon refused its task. The fourth time—thrice had he time to relent—the officer succeeded and the boy's life-blood flowed at his feet. So records William H. Russell in "My Diary in India in the year 1858-59", Vol. II, p. 402. This happened at Lucknow, during the fighting for the relief of the Residency in which the English were held in siege. The boy so murdered in cold blood and in such tragic circumstances belonged to a Kashmiri family, and neither he nor his blind companion had given any cause for offence whatever.

In the morning following the massacre of English women and children at Bibighar (Kanpur) the dead bodies were cast into a nearby well. Two small children, who had escaped death the previous evening, ran round the horrible well in an attempt to escape, but were soon caught by the sweepers (or the executioners) and thrown alive in the well in the presence of a vast multitude of on-lookers none of whom did anything in overt protest.

Again at Lucknow a most horrible case of torture and killing took place. In revenge for the death of a popular British officer of a Sikh regiment, an Indian sepoy was seized by the legs and an attempt made to tear him in two. When this failed, he was dragged along by the legs ; as if this cruel operation was insufficient, was stabbed in the face with bayonets. He writhed in pain "as his captors dug the sharp bayonets into his lacerated and trampled body, while his blood, trickling down dyed the white sand over which he was being dragged. But the worst was yet to come : while still alive, though faint and feeble from his many wounds, he was deliberately placed upon a small fire of dry sticks, which had been improvised for the purpose, and there held down, in spite of his dying struggles which, becoming weaker and more

feeble every moment, were, from their very faintness and futile desperation, cruel to behold. Once during this frightful operation, the wretched victim, maddened by pain, managed to break away from his tormentors and, already horribly burnt, fled a short distance, but he was immediately brought back and placed upon the fire, and there held till life was extinct.*

At Jhansi women threw themselves into wells to escape the possibility† of dishonour. Some men too jumped into wells ; those who were not instantly drowned, were shot through the head as soon as they bobbed out of water for breath ; others were hauled out to be killed. Many women stood in front of their husbands and sons to protect them from the bullets of British soldiers, only to die a heroic death along with those whom they sought to shield.‡

Sita Ram, a subedar in the Company's army remained loyal, but his sepoy-son rebelled during the 'mutiny'. He was sentenced to death and the father was put in command of the shooting squad. However, at the last moment, a considerate officer exempted him from performing this most inhuman duty.§

At Bibighar again, the cruel executioners had hung by the neck, in a most tormenting manner, a child on a hook which they had found fixed to a wall. The child died a painful death probably in the presence of the women who were themselves dying of their wounds and so could render no help to the struggling baby.

Such were the ghastly atrocities that were committed by both sides during the dark days of 1857 and 1858. Seldom in recorded history had man ceased to be man so completely ; never did he so cruelly excel the devil in his dark deeds. Neither during the French Revolution, nor in Nadir Shah's plunder of Delhi, nor in the atrocities of Chenghez Khan or Kublai Khan nor in the mass massacres of Taimur, nor during the regime of Nero, who fiddled while Rome burnt, is there a record of such abhorrent deeds of cruelty as were committed by both the sides during the mutiny. Fearful atrocities were committed on women and children, the aged and the infirm, in the aftermath of Partition, but these fade into insignificance before the horrors of 1857. Even in the dark ages man was perhaps not so barbarous as he turned himself to be in 1857. Indeed, Indians as well as Englishmen never debased themselves so completely and sunk so low into savagery as they did during the dark days of this great upheaval.

At the same time one must hasten to add that in both camps there were people who denounced these inhumanities. There were also many ennobling acts of kindness and chivalry in the midst of barbarities like streaks of light in a dark cloud. To these a reference has been made later in these pages.

B. DRAMATIC NATURE OF EVENTS

Another feature which distinguishes the Indian rebellion from any other military action in world history is that its events depict themselves as a series of immortal dramas. It has been suggested that "not one single element that goes to make up a world drama or a great world epic is wanting. Scene succeeds scene with dramatic swiftness : figures heroic who would not have done despite to an Homeric stage ; figures

* Majendie, quoted by Dr. Sen in "Eighteen Fifty-Seven", pp. 415-16.

† It must be stated to the credit of the British soldiers that actually they treated the unfortunate women and children with kindness.

‡ Vishnu Godse's "Majha Pravas".

§ Dr. Sen, "Eighteen Fifty-Seven", page 6.

tragic and pathetic such as only the genius of a Shakespeare could adequately present; figures half-divine and wholly daemonic such as only a Milton could have called up from the vasty deep of his almost inspired imagination; all these move across the stage."*

An Englishman had conceived the idea of writing an epic on the events of the revolt. This gentleman was making a tour of India in search of historic and pre-historic antiquities. His idea was to write the story of the 'Mutiny' in verse and to make it a work comparable to the ancient epics of India. He was further thinking of composing his work to cover both the ancient and the modern history of India, but was overtaken by death before the completion of his task.†

On account of its dramatic side, and so tragically dramatic it is, the story of the 'Mutiny' has an interest of its own throughout the world. To the people of India and the people of England, it has a special interest—to the Indian because of the supreme spirit exhibited in it to obtain freedom from bondage, to the Englishman on account of the halo of achievement that surrounds it and the lesson that it teaches.

The number of books that have been written on the 'Mutiny', the mass of published documents coupled with a larger volume of unpublished records, far exceed the literature on any other single subject of world history. Wherever English language is read and written, the story of the 'Mutiny' finds a prominent place.

C. FOUNDATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE

In Indian history the importance of 1857 lies in the fact that it laid the foundations of the future independence of India. Though, for the time, the people were laid low both morally and physically, their spirit was unbroken and within two decades the spirit of freedom again began to re-assert itself. How this unconquered spirit shaped the future destiny of India, we shall see in a later chapter; suffice it here to say that in spite of the ruthlessness and cruelty meted out to hundreds of thousands of our countrymen, they did not die in vain.

Those of the sepoys who had mutinied, suffered for the love of their own form of faith and worship sacrificing themselves for their principles. The innocent persons who were mercilessly put to death in the vengeance of the conqueror paid the price of their life for being the citizens of a subject nation. And what shall we say of the women and children who were roasted alive in mass-fires caused by British soldiers in villages; those trying to escape having met their doom by the bullets of the surrounding troops. Their blood too was not shed in vain. The blood of the warrior killed in action consecrates the field of battle, but the blood of the innocent rises to heaven where God receives it to send it back for divine retribution.

New approach to old problem

From another point of view, the uprising of 1857 has no parallel in Indian history. It was a new and bold approach to an old problem. History records that invaders from the north came and established their kingdoms in India. Resistance to them had been of varying degrees and kinds, but in course of time the conquered reconciled themselves to the new situation. Another invader came and the same story was repeated. But history does not record that before 1857 there had been such a mass uprising of a whole army aided by a whole people against an alien rule. In the past

* Oswell's Sketches of Rulers of India, volume I, p. xxiii of Introduction.
†*Ibid.*

there had been wars between rulers, but the 'Mutiny' was a war between the ruler and the people fighting *en masse*.

In this respect neither Indian history nor world history offers any parallel to the Indian rebellion. The world over, there had of course been great and frightful wars, but these were fought between sovereign nations in open fields of battle or between different rulers. There had also been internal revolutions like that in France. In contrast, the 'Mutiny' of 1857 was entirely a new method of ejecting a foreign power. Here a subject race had taken up arms against a powerful alien ruler firmly established in the country's soil. And the failure of the attempt does not belittle the lofty endeavour.

Viewed in this light, the year 1857 is of great significance in the history of our country. Its very failure had its bright side—it demonstrated the futility of brute force and led to the evolution, not long afterwards, by the Father of the Nation, of the technique of non-violence by which our freedom was won.

In spite of crime, cruelty, violence and strife which are deplorably prevalent in life, there is a fundamental goodness in the human heart—deep down in every man there is a yearning to sympathise and share in others' sorrows and lend a helping hand to those stricken by distress, disease or calamity. It is this earnestness which fosters benevolence and brotherliness.

CHAPTER FOUR

EAST INDIA COMPANY

A. CHART OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

B. THE LURE OF INDIA

C. CONFLICT BETWEEN EUROPEAN NATIONS

D. FOUNDATION OF EAST INDIA COMPANY

E. THE COMPANY AS EMPIRE-BUILDER

F. FAULTS IN THE COMPANY'S RULE

"The story of the rise and progress of the British power in India possesses peculiar fascination for ...... it lays bare the defects in the character of the native races which made their subjugation possible; it indicates the trusting and faithful nature, the impressionable character, the passionate appreciation of great qualities, which formed alike the strength and weakness of those races—their strength after they had been conquered, their weakness during the struggle."

—COL. MALLESON, in *Decisive Battles in India.*

A. CHART OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

[This chart shows the constitutional development of the Company]

EAST INDIA COMPANY

Established in 1600

by

the Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth. A fund was subscribed amounting to £ 30,133 consisting of 101 shares, subscription of individuals varying from £ 100 to £ 3,000. The Queen herself was a share-holder. The Charter which was to run for 15 years was signed by the Queen herself on January 1, 1600. The Company's name was "THE GOVERNOR AND COMPANY OF MERCHANTS OF LONDON TRADING INTO THE EAST INDIES." The Company was to be run

by

Governor | Committeemen

To be elected annually by the share-holders

1600—1612

Period of separate voyages

1613

Joint Stock Company

Capital raised for several voyages, but balance-sheet drawn for individual voyages.

1628

Presented a Memorial for its monopoly

1635

A new Company formed entitled Courten's Association. The King was a secret partner of the Company. The Company did not accomplish anything.

1641

Petition before the Long Parliament for getting back its monopoly.

1647

Emergence of the Parliament as the supreme power and acknowledgment of Company's monopoly rights.

1657

Cromwell's decision to allow only one Company to carry on India-trade *on a united and permanent joint-stock*

1661—1683

Company got the right of coinage, command of forts, troops and power to form alliances and make war and peace and to administer justice in its settlements.

1690

Parliament resolved to charter a new Company

1691

Dowgate Association started

1693

New Charter granted to the old Company

1694

House of Commons' Resolution upholding that every subject of England had an equal right to trade with India and the East *unless* prohibited by Act of Parliament.

1698

Bill passed that those who would subscribe to the State loan of two million pounds would form the General Society Trading to the East Indies. Old Company given time up to 1701 to wind up its affairs. One-fourth of the capital secured in the name of the Treasurer of the old Company vested in the new Company which received a Royal Charter by an Act of Parliament.

New Company unsound. Old Company gets its existence but not the monopoly.

1702

Union of both the Companies

(*a*) Capital and dead stock of both going to the United Company.

(*b*) Both Companies had their Court of Directors for their separate affairs.

(*c*) Supreme Court of Managers for the United Company, thus :

UNITED COMPANY

Supreme Court of Managers

Court of Directors (*Old Company*)

Court of Directors (*New Company*)

This arrangement did not work well.

1708

GODOLPHIN'S AWARD DELIVERED

AND ACCEPTED (SEPTEMBER 29)

By it, the old Company surrendered its Charter and merged with the new Company.

The amalgamated body was called :

THE UNITED EAST INDIA COMPANY

I

In England

had

A Court of Proprietors

(Consisting of share-holders who held shares of more than £ 500 as the supreme body to give decisions.)

AND

A Court of Directors

(who were selected from the Court of Proprietors for day-to-day administration of the Company.)

REPRESENTED
in India
by

Governor, BOMBAY	Governor, MADRAS	Governor, CALCUTTA

Each assisted by a Council consisting of three members

1773

Regulating Act passed making

CHANGES IN ENGLAND

(a) Only those who held a stock of £1,000 for 12 months at least could vote in the Court of Proprietors

(b) Directors were to hold office for four years instead of one

AND

CHANGES IN INDIA

Bengal Governor
became
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF BENGAL
assisted by four Councillors
(to hold office for 5 years)

BOMBAY	MADRAS

Under the Governor-General of Bengal

All to be chosen by the Company.

The Regulating Act was meant to bring Parliamentary supervision over the Company in its activities both in India and England.

PITT'S INDIA ACT

(1784)

CREATED
IN ENGLAND
A BOARD OF CONTROL

"to superintend, direct and control all acts, operations and concerns which in any wise relate to the civil or military government or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies with access to Company's records, with power to censure Directors' correspondence, and issue direct communication to India-posted officers and recall any servant of the Company from India."

CONSISTING

of

A PRESIDENT AND FIVE COMMISSIONERS

(appointed by the King and holding office as honorary members, and without patronage, during his pleasure, comprising Chancellor of Exchequer, Secretary of State, and four Privy Councillors)

THE COMPANY NOW CONSISTED OF

IN ENGLAND —> controlled by the Board of Control appointed by the King

COURT OF PROPRIETORS

(A body to elect Directors and receive dividends)

COURT OF DIRECTORS

(To look after the commercial side of the Company and its management)

SECRET COMMITTEE

consisting of three members from amongst the Directors, viz.
(i) Chairman;
(ii) Deputy Chairman, and
(iii) Senior Director

(responsible to transmit secret orders of the Board of Control to India-posted officers without informing the other Directors.)

and

IN INDIA

GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN COUNCIL

Governor of Bombay Presidency

Governor of Madras Presidency

with three Councillors including the Presidency Commander-in-Chief

NOTE—(*a*) All to be appointed by the Court of Directors, but could be recalled by the Crown, or the Directors. The Governor-General to be appointed by the Crown.

(*b*) Only covenanted servants of the Company to become Councillors.

(*c*) Special courts created in England to try offences committed by the British personnel in India.

(*d*) It was declared that to pursue schemes of *conquest* in India was *contrary* to the wish, the honour and the policy of the English nation and aggressive *wars* were *forbidden* except with the consent of the Home authorities.

1786

AMENDMENT ACT

(made no important change)

1788

DECLARATORY ACT

requiring the Company to lay yearly before Parliament, its annual Balance-Sheet. Board empowered to send Royal troops to India and debit the expenses to the Company

1793

Charter of the Company renewed for 20 years

1808—12

INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

appointed by the House of Commons

1813

RENEWAL OF CHARTER FOR 20 YEARS

(*a*) Monopoly withdrawn.

(*b*) Rupees one lakh to be set apart yearly for education among Indian youth.

(*c*) Anglican Church established—a regular Bishop appointed at Calcutta.

1833

RENEWAL OF THE CHARTER FOR 20 YEARS

(*a*) Mercantile character withdrawn ; no trade permitted. To carry on government only.

(*b*) Company divested of its Merchant Fleet.

(*c*) Law Member added to Governor-General's Council for codifying Indian laws.

(*d*) Designation of Governor-General of Bengal changed to Governor-General of India in Council.

(*e*) Principle recognised that interests of Indians to be preferred to those of Europeans. Also Indians to be employed in all services.

1853

RENEWAL OF CHARTER FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD

without any substantial modification.

ORGANIZATION OF COMPANY FROM 1853 TILL TRANSFER OF RULE TO CROWN

IN ENGLAND

COURT OF PROPRIETORS
AND
COURT OF DIRECTORS

(Controlled by the Board of Control. Also called Commissioners for the Affairs of India. Chancellor of Exchequer *ex-officio* PRESIDENT.)

SECRET COMMITTEE

AND IN INDIA

GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN COUNCIL

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

[With three Councillors and a Law Member]

GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY

GOVERNOR OF MADRAS

Each with a Council.

NOTES—(1) Appointments in India made by the Directors. No concurrence of Crown necessary for appointments. Crown could, however, recall any employee of the Company if it so desired.

(2) Under the new scheme, the control of the British Cabinet and, through it, of Parliament, over the affairs of India was greatly extended. The Board of Control was a semi-Cabinet body and had effective functions of superintendence and control. The President of the Board (an office held *ex-officio* by the Chancellor of Exchequer) was particularly vested with large powers. Recruitment to the superior services in India was made through open competition—the powers of patronage which were previously in the hands of the Court of Directors were now lost.

B. THE LURE OF INDIA

India, with its riches, had always a great fascination for other countries. The unexplored opportunities, which this vast subcontinent of plenty and prosperity contained led people to an irresistible urge of making their way to India. It was this urge which for centuries brought conquerors through the Khyber Pass. It was again the same urge—*el dorado*, "the land of gold"— which attracted the Europeans too. The Europeans, as traders, came on the western shores of India, Vasco da Gama having reached Calicut in 1498.

India saw the advent, the rise, the consolidation and the downfall of the Moghul empire on the one hand and her conquest by English traders on the other, the processes taking shape simultaneously, between the period 1526 to 1858. Both the powers had gradually subjugated India and ruled over her for long.

This chapter briefly deals with the advent of the European traders, the rivalries between the different European trading companies, who aspired to colonize India, the supremacy of the English Company over its rivals, and the rise of the English East India Company from traders to empire-builders until its extinction in 1858 as a direct result of the 1857 rebellion. It was trade through which people of one nation came in contact with other nations, and trade played a vital role in the British conquest of India.

In those days, trade between one country and another was done only through undeveloped land routes. It was fraught with grave risks, apart from the inherent troubles and the high costs involved in transport. There were, for instance, highway robbers to be encountered, tolls to be paid. Apart from the fact that the land route presented these hazards, it was the triumph of the Turks at Constantinople in 1453 that drove Europeans to seek new routes to the East, particularly India.

The European nations were now keen to discover a sea-route to India—a route which would provide a safe channel of transport. Although efforts were made by several nations, the credit of pioneering the first route by sea to India goes to Portugal. Vasco da Gama, after going round the Cape of Good Hope, landed at Calicut on May 22, 1498. He was received warmly by the local ruler, the Zamorin, a Hindu king, but it was not until the end of 1510 when Alfonso de Albuquerque* captured the port of Goa from the Bijapur Sultanate that the Portuguese got a foothold in the country.

Between 1498 and 1510, the Portuguese had their base at Cochin and Cannanore. But there always existed the threat of hostilities from the Zamorin who did not like the Portuguese trade policy inasmuch as the latter wanted to exterminate the Muslim traders from whom the Zamorin derived considerable revenue. Albuquerque was the first European, after Alexander the Great, who saw the possibility of controlling the affairs of India from overseas and he realized that, for the fulfilment of his vision, a secure base was indispensable. So he selected Goa an island with an excellent harbour, for his headquarters. In course of time, the Portuguese, on account of their superior oceanic strategy (the coastal defence of Indians being unequal to them), established their factories all along the Indian sea coast from Diu (off the Kathiawar coast) to Hugli in Bengal. But they did not try to penetrate into the country as their English contemporaries later did.

The steps taken by Albuquerque to strengthen Portuguese hold on India included

*Albuquerque came to India in 1503 as Commander of a Squadron. In 1509, he was appointed Governor of Portuguese Affairs in India.

marriages between the European settlers and Indians, employment of Indians in civil and military establishments, and opening of schools on western lines. The practice of *sati* was banned. Proselytising activities, which brought the Portuguese in great opposition, were feverishly undertaken. Missions were led to the Court of Akbar by Jesuit Fathers and they continued to have their hold on the Moghal Court till they were ousted by the diplomatic English.

The supremacy of the Portuguese power was, however, limited and short-lived. Its downfall was due to their proselytising activities, faulty government, corruption, the absorption of Portugal by Spain in 1580 and the challenge which they received from the other European nations, such as the Dutch, the French and the English in India itself. The Portuguese had also not the ability to fight an organised Moghal empire.

C. CONFLICT BETWEEN EUROPEAN NATIONS

The first to challenge the Portuguese oceanic supremacy were the Dutch. It was Pope Alexander VI who had assigned to the Portuguese, a Roman Catholic nation, the hemisphere east of the Azores, as a result of which the Portuguese claimed themselves to be the "Lords of the Sea" and thought themselves to be "justified in confiscating the goods of all those who navigate the sea without their permission". The Portuguese King also assumed the title of "Lord of the Navigation, Conquest and Commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India". The Protestant Dutch who had bitter memories of their sufferings under the political and religious tyranny of the Hapsburg rulers of Spain did not respect the Pope's decree.

In 1602, Holland sponsored a Dutch East India Company to carry on trade, build forts, enter into treaties with local princes and to make war or peace, generally with the object of overthrowing the Portuguese supremacy. On November 11, 1604, a treaty was made between the Zamorin and the Dutch against the Portuguese. Yet, the main development of Dutch trade took place on the eastern coast where they found a friendlier reception than their opponents, the Portuguese, had. The Dutch fortified Calicut and made it the headquarters of their Governor in India. During a period of almost 170 years the Dutch held a number of places, but they were primarily traders with no ambition to colonise. They showed tolerance to Indian religion and though they offered formidable resistance to the English in eastern coasts, they were rather content with only trade exploitation of India. Except that by eliminating the Portuguese they indirectly helped the English to gain ground in India, the period of their stay is not marked by any territorial conquests. They suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the English in 1759 and were finally eliminated in 1825. The Dutch example of supplanting the Portuguese in India did not remain confined to them. And several other European nations participated in the early endeavours over oriental trade, especially Indian trade, and founded "East India Companies" of their own. Thus, the Danes started their Danish East India Company and in 1620 and 1755 established factories at Tranquebar and Serampore. They, however, wound up their operations in 1825 by selling their interest to the British for Rs.12,50,000. The Flemish, under the aegis of the Emperor of Austria, floated the Ostend Company in 1723 with their chief settlement at Banki Bazar on Hugli, three miles north of Barrackpore. In 1731 was started a Swedish Company. It were, however, the British and the French who really had a combat for the domination of the country.

The desire to have oriental trade germinated in the French during the reign of Francis I (1515—47), when some merchants sailed from France with two ships to trade on the

Eastern seas. This venture proved futile and so also several others during successive periods. It was finally in 1664 that a State-controlled Company was formed for rendering France "commercial and opulent". This French East India Company sent its first expedition to reach Surat in 1668. Here the first French factory was built. The English East India Company too had its establishment at Surat.

Thus the French dreamed of building up a trade empire in India since 1527, but it was only after a century and a half that they arrived in India and put up their first factory at Surat, although they were the first to aspire for a dominion in India.

After the establishment of the Surat factory in 1668 the foundations of Pondicherry were laid by Francis Martin in 1674. Later came Dupleix in 1731 and within ten years became the Governor of Pondicherry in 1741. In 1746, he captured Madras. Between 1746—48, the French were at war with the English. Subsequent wars followed and with the victory of the English at Wandiwash in 1760 the French became a power of no consequence.

After drawn-out power conflicts between the Portuguese and the Dutch, between the Portuguese and the English, between the Dutch and the English and finally between the French and the English, for dominion over the affairs of India, it was only the British who were able to hold their own in this country. How their ventures started and developed may now be studied.

D. FOUNDATION OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

It was during the reign of Akbar that the first Englishman, Jesuit Father Thomas Stevens from Oxford, set foot on Indian soil in 1579. He was followed by a batch of English traders in 1583, led by merchant John Newberry. They were sent by the Merchant Adventurers to report on what could be bought and sold in Asia. They arrived with a letter from Queen Elizabeth for the Emperor, but failed to receive a formal audience for, to the Indian Sovereign, England and her Queen were matters of little significance.

One of the party, Ralph Fitch, returned to England in 1591 after collecting much useful information on the possibilities of trade with India, Burma and Siam.

The information recorded by Fitch led to the formation of an association in 1599 under the auspices of Merchant Adventurers. However, because of political considerations not to break peace with Spain and Portugal, the association's petition for "a warrant to fit out three ships, and export bullion, and also for a charter of privileges" was not acceded to, although, as an alternative, an embassy in the person of John Mildenhall was sent with a letter from the Queen to the Emperor Akbar, but he could reach Agra only in 1603 *via* the land route—Kandhar—and succeeded in obtaining a firman from him. He had brought with him 29 horses, each worth £60, for the Emperor.

The regular progress of English trade with India actually began on the signing by Queen Elizabeth on January 1, 1600, of the Royal Charter starting the English East India Company under the title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies". The Company was monopolistic in character. It had exclusive privileges to Eastern trade *vis-a-vis* the other English merchants on the one hand, and to obtain exclusive privileges for itself from oriental governments on the other. It had also the uncontested right to execute schemes to oust other rival mercantile interests from the Eastern theatre. The Queen herself was one of the shareholders.

After the grant of the Royal Charter, the Company sent Captain Hawkins who arrived

at Surat in 1608 with a letter from King James I asking for the grant of trade facilities from the Emperor. With his knowledge of Persian and Turkish, Hawkins gained close access to Jehangir. But the opposition from the Jesuits at the court proved formidable and he could not succeed in his mission, although he was received kindly by the King and his gifts valued at 25,000 gold pieces were accepted. He was, however, appointed to be a Commander (Mansabdar) of 400 with an annual salary of Rs.30,000 (not actually drawn) and was married to the daughter of an Armenian Christian. He went back home in 1611.

In 1615 came Sir Thomas Roe, the accredited ambassador of the King of England. In the meanwhile in 1613 the Portuguese had offended the Emperor's power over the sea by seizing some imperial ships, imprisoning many Muslims and plundering the cargoes, resulting in the Emperor and the Portuguese coming on war-footing with each other. Sir Thomas Roe returned to England in 1619 and though he failed to obtain the formal treaty of monopoly to buy cheap in India and thus oust other European nations, he secured considerable concessions by means of an Imperial firman and laid the foundation for the Company's trade. By then the English had already established their settlements in 1611 at Masulipatam and in 1613 at Surat. By this firman the English merchants were given liberty to trade freely; they were allowed to live in rented houses on the shore, to govern themselves and could bear arms when moving in the city. Normal dues were to be paid by them. Before Sir Thomas left, the Company had established factories at Surat, Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach, which were governed by the President and the Council of the Surat Factory. Surat became the depot for cotton, muslin, saltpetre, indigo and dye-stuffs which were collected from all parts of the country.

With the capture of Ormuz in 1622, the English became masters of the situation and they were now regarded by the Moghals as pilgrim-voyage-insurers.

Simultaneously, the English opened a factory in 1613 at Masulipatam on the eastern coast. Due to Dutch rivalry, it was abandoned temporarily in 1628, but in 1632, after having obtained the "golden firman" from the Sultan of Golconda, the English regained their position. In 1639-40 a factory was founded in Madras which was also provided with a fort named Fort St. George. Madras was raised to the rank of presidency in 1652, and in 1658 all the English factories in Bengal and the Coromandel Coast were placed under its charge. Thus Madras with a fort was the first Presidency town of the English.

The fort of St. George was preceded by the establishment of a factory in 1633 at Balasore and at Hugli in 1651 with subordinate agencies at Kasim Bazar and Patna in Bengal. It was during this period that the English Surgeon, Boughton, secured great influence by his surgical skill in the Moghal Court at Agra and later in Bengal. A favourite daughter of Shah Jahan was severely burnt at Agra in 1640. The Court physicians were unable to cure her. The Emperor despatched a messenger to Surat desiring the services of one of the English doctors. Mr. Gabriel Boughton was selected for the mission. By his skilful treatment, the princess was cured. On Shah Jahan asking him to name a reward, the patriotic Boughton requested that the East India Company might be allowed to trade in Bengal, free of duty, to establish factories in the province and also that the Company's ships be allowed to come up the Hugli. This was granted by an imperial firman. Mr. Boughton carried it himself to Bengal arriving at Raj Mahal where Shah Shuja, second son of Shah Jahan, held his court as the Viceroy of Bengal. At that time, one of Shah Shuja's ladies was lying seriously ill. Boughton succeeded in curing her too.

Shah Shuja out of gratitude gave all aid to Boughton for establishing the English trade in Bengal on a permanent basis.

Thus, during the first half of the 17th century (1611—1652) the English East India Company had their factories at a few places on the Western Coast, a fort at Madras, and were having duty-free trade in Bengal. This marks the first stage of their trading career.

Before that time the trade of Bengal was in the hands of the Portuguese who, a few years previously, had incurred the Emperor's displeasure for carrying on traffic in slaves and defying the Nawab of Bengal. Shah Jahan had then sent an army against them. The Portuguese settlement at Hugli was destroyed, their ships burnt, and numbers of them sent to Agra as prisoners. On the destruction of the Portuguese the English were anxious to get the trade in their own hands. They applied for, and obtained, permission to trade in Bengal. But they had to pay heavy duties and their ships were obliged to anchor near Kedgeri and not allowed to come up the Hugli. Boughton had now changed the entire aspect. Large fortunes were made by every one connected with the Company. But the ambition to rule India had not yet entered the English mind.

In 1667 was married King Charles II to the Catherine of Braganza, and Bombay was presented to the King in dowry by the Portuguese. The King leased out the town to the Company in 1668 on a token annual rent of £10. The conspicuous position of the place enabled its possessor to control the whole coastal trading of the region. Also, being outside the limits of the Moghal empire, it could be easily fortified and defended. In 1687 it was raised to the Presidency status.

In Bengal the Company obtained certain trade concessions in the matter of duty, but there were occasional disputes between the employees of the Company and the Governor of Bengal resulting in the seizure of the Company's goods every now and then. Thinking that the power of Delhi was getting weak, the Company tried in 1686 to seize Hugli by force. The attempt, however, failed. Neither could the Company retain Hugli nor could it build a fortified settlement in Saugor at the mouth of the Hugli or at Chittagong. The English were completely driven away from these places and took shelter at Chutanuttee, later known as Calcutta, and Job Charnock, who had managed to escape from the Imperial onslaught, opened negotiations for permission to build a factory at the site, which he finally got. In 1690 Charnock ultimately settled at Calcutta and this was followed the next year by an Imperial order from the Delhi Court permitting the English to carry on their trade in Bengal on a token yearly payment to the Imperial treasury. In 1696 they secured permission to fortify their factory. In 1700, Calcutta was made a separate Presidency after having been under the Presidency of Madras for 42 years. The fort at Calcutta was named after King William and became known as Fort William.

Thus, by the end of the 17th century, the English East India Company had three Presidencies functioning in India, independent of each other, *viz.* Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, all the three at strategic points and at oceanic openings. The Indian powers of those days were weak in maritime strength and the fact that the English had now three centres on sea openings lent them, in course of time, a great superiority over their Indian counterparts, because they could always get reinforcements through the sea-route and this had a vital effect on the future course of Indian history.

The disintegration of the Moghul empire was in a gradual process. It was particularly marked after 1723 which favoured the expansion of the English Company. The growth of Maratha power and the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali coupled with the bid for power of Imperial

Viceroys and Governors all made for the expansion of the British power in India.

Sirajuddaula succeeded to the Nawabship of Bengal in 1756 and made things difficult for the English. He seized the English factory at Kasimbazar and later captured Calcutta and Fort William, driving the English out of town to take refuge on boats. Fort William was retrieved by Clive in January 1757. The Nawab's endeavours to secure French mediation did not succeed. He then marched on Calcutta and rejected the terms offered by Clive. However, a night attack on his camp unnerved him. He concluded a treaty with the Company by which it was restored to its original holdings. The English were permitted to fortify Calcutta as they liked. They could now coin rupees to be accepted all over Bengal. Clive prudently thought that a simultaneous combat with the Nawab and the French, now that hostilities had broken between France and England, would be beyond his management.

Clive captured Chandernagar, a French possession, in March 1757, giving a crushing blow to the French prestige in India and to the hopes of Sirajuddaula to fall back for aid upon the French. This was followed by the famous plot in which banker Omichand (Amir Chand) was involved to dethrone Sirajuddaula and make Mir Jafar the Nawab instead. Mir Jafar was playing a tool in the hands of Clive and was prepared to pay any price for the coveted Nawabi of Bengal. The treaty with Mir Jafar was followed by the battle of Plassey (June, 1757) in which the English came out victorious. Sirajuddaula was captured and later murdered by Miran, the son of Mir Jafar. The way was now open to Mir Jafar who was proclaimed the Subedar of Bengal.

The treachery and conspiracy was completed. Mir Jafar, the puppet Nawab, signed a treaty with the Company, which gave the Company, (*a*) the right to trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, (*b*) the Zemindari rights over the 24-Parganas, and (*c*) a total sum of Rs.1,77,00,000 for the redress of the Company, for the maintenance of its forces and for the relief of the English, the Hindus and the Muslims of Calcutta, the money to be disposed of according to the wishes of Clive and other high officers of the Company.

E. THE COMPANY AS EMPIRE-BUILDER

As purely a trading Company, it should not normally have been necessary for it to interfere in the internal administration of the country. There was, however, the fact that the nature of the Company's enterprise compelled its servants to provide themselves with troops and fortified places. King Charles II had also conferred on the Company the right to wage war with local powers, if need arose. All the same, these delegated powers of sovereignty were exercised with restraint. Now, in 1759 Clive managed to obtain from the Emperor Shah Alam a grant of sovereign authority over Bengal, a proposal which had the approval of the authorities in England. In the result, disputes arose between the Company and Mir Jafar who as a puppet of the Company was powerless to check the Company's servants in their career of enrichment. In 1760 he was replaced by Nawab Mir Qasim, an able and energetic person, who sought to introduce reforms in the administration and urged on the Company to stop private trade by its servants which they were carrying on without payment of duty. This was not accepted because the Company's servants, whose emoluments were meagre, were able to derive fortunes from this source of income. In justice to the Indian traders the Nawab thereupon cancelled the duties levied on their trade also. The Company unjustly demanded their re-imposition. The Nawab refused to oblige and in the chain of incidents the English captured Patna in 1763, but it was recaptured by the Nawab the same

day. Other pitched battles followed, but Mir Qasim was defeated and, after putting to death certain British prisoners held by him and some of his own high officers, fled to Avadh. Mir Jafar was now restored, but war was not yet over for Mir Qasim enlisted the support of Shujauddaula, the Nawab Vazir of Avadh who was joined by the Emperor. Then took place in October 1764 the well-known battle of Buxar in which the combined forces with the Nawab were defeated after stubborn resistance.

In spite of this victory, the Company recognised the gravity of the situation which had arisen on account of the misgovernment of Bengal and sent back Clive (now Lord Clive) to inaugurate reforms. Clive no longer contemplated to exercise the sovereignty of the Company because the battle of Buxar had impressed upon him the danger lest "the natives, left without European allies, would find in their own resources means of carrying on war against us in a much more soldierly manner than they ever thought of when their reliance on European allies encouraged their natural indolence". Clive, therefore, only took half-hearted measures and in the process induced the Emperor, who, after Buxar, had accepted a position of dependence on the Company, to grant to the latter the Dewani (right of collecting the revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in return for an annual grant of Rs.26 lakhs and the assignment of the districts of Allahabad and Kora which the Nawab of Avadh was required to surrender.

After Buxar, Mir Jafar who had been restored as Nawab was now dead and his successor was a minor. There was now dual administration in Bengal, the Company collecting the revenue and carrying on civil jurisdiction connected with it, while the military and police jurisdiction was in the hands of the Nawab through a Deputy nominated by the Company. The cultivators were subjected to excessive taxation and Parliament tacitly connived at the misgovernment by requiring, in 1767, an annual payment of £4,00,000 from the Company as the price of permission to remain in possession of the territories acquired by it in India.

To the misery of Bengal was added the terrible famine of 1770 which reduced Bengal's population by one-third. In order to make some reform a new office of Governor-General was created to replace the office of Governor of Bengal and this functionary exercised some authority over the administrations of Madras and Bombay which hitherto were being carried on independently, that is to say, all the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, were previously almost autonomous units of government subject to the control of the Directors in England. Warren Hastings then Governor of Bengal was the first to fill the office of Governor-General in 1774.

In spite of many difficulties Warren Hastings (1774—1785) devoted himself to the task of assuring the foundation of British dominion in India. Though he was averse to projects of conquest, he designed the establishment of British influence throughout India. In respect of the administration of Bengal he assumed full responsibility and impressed on his subordinates that they owed a duty to the people whose affairs they administered and that this duty was paramount to all private interest. He established proper civil and criminal courts and was the first to recognise claims of Hindu and Muslim law in the administration of civil justice. He also made reforms in the relationship between zamindars and tenants intended to save the latter from excessive exactions to which they had hitherto been subjected. In thus forwarding the interests of British power and restoring the Company's finances, he sometimes adopted unworthy methods, possibly against his inherent inclinations, and as the only alternatives to meet the difficulties which the members of his Council were placing in his way. His errors involved him in a long and

memorable impeachment at the bar of British Parliament. The trial, which lasted from 1788 to 1795 and which resulted in his honourable acquittal, was made famous by the burning eloquence of Burke and Sheridan, which reminded the world that the principle of British rule, even in the remotest land, must rest on impartial justice and that the exercise of sovereign power is justified only in so far as it aimed at the good of the subjects.

Apart from his impeachment so well-known to the world and Macaulay's essay on him, and the incidents of Nand Kumar, Chet Singh and the Begums of Avadh, which tarnish his memory, Hastings is also remembered for his love of oriental literature. He knew Persian and Arabic and could speak Hindustani fluently. He founded the famous Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 and on the establishment of the Asiatic Society, he rendered invaluable assistance to William Jones who translated many Sanskrit works into English. This Society is even to-day serving the cause of oriental learning. To many Sanskrit scholars whom he established in Calcutta, his assistance was valuable and regular. He also got the first atlas made of Bengal through Major Rennell who is known as the father of modern Indian geography.

Lord Cornwallis and Sir John Shore who followed Warren Hastings mostly devoted themselves to internal reforms with little interference with Indian rulers. It was during the governor-generalship of Lord Wellesley (1798—1805) that further territorial gains were made and Indian rulers brought into alliance with the Company. The territories of Arcot, Tanjore and the Karnatak, and some valuable territories of the Nawab of Avadh (now included in the State of Uttar Pradesh) came under the Company's direct rule. Tipu Sultan was attacked and slain in 1799 and the kingdom of Mysore was restored to a member of the family of the original ruler whom Hyder Ali had displaced. At the time of Lord Wellesley's recall in 1805 the Marathas were the only competing power for the sovereignty of India, although in 1802-3 he had succeeded in imposing certain terms on the Peshwa of Poona, the Raja of Berar and Nagpur and the Scindhia of Gwalior.

Then came Lord Minto who, like Cornwallis, devoted himself to internal reforms. The question of admission of missionaries into India was also raised and hotly debated in his time and though Minto held strong views against missionary activities, the appointment of a Bishop of Calcutta and three Archdeacons paid from Indian funds was sanctioned.

After Minto, came again the period of annexation in which Lord Hastings (1813—1823) added large territories to British India. Between 1817—19, the Bhonsla Raja of Nagpur and Berar was overthrown and part of his territory annexed. The Peshwa of Poona was also liquidated and his large territories were taken over by the Company. The Scindhia of Gwalior and the Holkar of Indore, though left in the enjoyment of their states, were brought under British control. The Company's power within the major part of India was now paramount.

Lord William Bentinck's governor-generalship (1828—1835) was marked by certain social reforms of which the abolition of Sati was the most notable. Indians were admitted into the public service in larger numbers, both in the executive side and to judicial offices as subordinate judges. Revenue administration was also improved. It was during Bentinck's time that, at the instance of Lord Macaulay, English replaced Persian as the official and literary language of the Indian Government.

The completion of British hold on India was, however, destined to be done by Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) although Sind had been taken over without justification in 1843 by Lord Ellenborough. Lord Dalhousie

added enormous territories to the Company's jurisdiction by his annexations of the Punjab, Avadh, Nagpur and several minor principalities, such as Jhansi, Satara and Sambhalpur. The whole of India was now under the sway of the British who from insignificant beginnings created a vast empire for themselves, thus fulfilling the English proverb, "give an Englishman an inch and he will ask for an ell".

In the fullness of all these achievements the Company's end was soon to be spelt during Lord Dalhousie's successor, the Earl of Canning (1856—62). But this must be left for a later chapter.

F. FAULTS IN THE COMPANY'S RULE

There are proofs that the East India Company did not govern well. Immediately prior to the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1853, a tract was brought out by the India Reform Society, London, entitled "The Government of India since 1834". This Society had been founded in March 1853 and had, from time to time, issued tracts on Indian subjects for the enlightenment of the people of England.

In its first tract the Society analysed the administration of the Company under various heads and drew the conclusion that the Company's administration was far from satisfactory. In making this analysis the Society applied some of the tests of good government to the administration of India as carried on since 1833, when the Charter Act, 1833, had been passed. These tests were classified under such headings as 'Peace', 'Finances', 'Material improvements', 'Condition of the people', 'Law and justice', 'Police', 'Education', 'Public employment of the natives', 'Popular contentment', 'Home control'. Analysing the position under each of these heads, the Society sought to prove that the Company had ill-administered the country. The following are some excerpts from the tract :

Peace—Now since 1834, the Government of India as established in the preceding year has, out of the nineteen years that have passed, been for fifteen of them in a state of war. . . . . . Applying then the test of peace to the last 20 years, what opportunity, what means, what chances can a Government, occupied more or less with war for fifteen of these years, have had of working out the improvement and the happiness of the natives ?

Finances—Pecuniary prosperity is the second great test of good government everywhere. In England, a deficit in the Treasury is the most heinous of all government offences. . . . Turn to India and what during the last fourteen years do we find? Deficit—deficit—deficit.

Condition of the People—But it is on India as a whole that attention must be fixed; and how sad the condition of the cultivator is in Bengal, with a population of 40 millions, how far worse it is in Madras with its 22 millions and how bad it is in Bombay with its 10 millions, the evidence thus briefly produced........ will give some general idea of. It is not merely cultivation that is depressed: it is society itself that is being gradually destroyed. The race of native gentry has already almost everywhere disappeared; and a new danger has arisen—that in another generation or two, the cultivators will not be worth having as subjects. For moral debasement is the inevitable consequence of physical depression. This prospect may be deemed 'satisfactory' by the persons responsible for it. But to India it is ruin and destruction: to England it is danger and disgrace.

Law and Justice—For fifteen years has the criminal law, as administered by the Company's courts, been condemned by Government itself.

Police—If there be little or no criminal law, there is, however, a police. But it has, we quote the declaration of 1,252 British and other Christian inhabitants of Calcutta and Lower Bengal in their petition to the House of Commons, 'not only failed to effect the prevention of crimes, the apprehension of offenders and the protection of life and property, but it has become the engine of oppression and a great cause of the corruption of the people.' . . . Tried then by the tests of law, justice and crime, the legislation of 1833 has not resulted in the improvement and happiness of the native of India.

Education—But this is well known that, whereas in Hindoo times every village community had its school, our destruction of village societies or municipalities has deprived the natives of their schools, such as they were, and has substituted nothing in their stead. . . In short, out of these 22 millions of people, the Indian Government yearly educates 160!

Public Employment of the Natives—In our earlier Indian career, natives were employed in the most important and confidential posts of our Government. Our regiments were officered by natives; in many places we had native agents and representatives; . . . . . . but gradually this use of native ability was displaced, and every post of profit, of trust, of value, transferred, at enormous addition to the cost of Government, to Englishman, until at last it became part and parcel of our established policy. . . . The legislation of 1833, however, attempted to remedy this monstrous injustice by

enacting that none should be excluded from any office by reason of religion, place of birth, descent, or colour. According to Mr. Campbell, 'this provision was a mere flourish of trumpets and of no practical effect whatever as far as the natives are concerned.' . . . But in India a people 'learned in all the arts of polished life, when we were yet in the woods, ... are proscribed as a race of incompetent, helpless incapables and condemned to everlasting inferiority in lands which their forefathers made famous.

Popular contentment—Are then the people of India content with the working of the legislation of 1833? It would be strange if they were; and they are not. They do not rebel: they do not resist: they do not rise against the Indian Government: . . . . for, under the British rule, the power of the Government is too strong and well-organised for a successful resort to these violent modes of manifesting public opinion. But now that the opportunity has arisen—now that there is a chance of improvement, they petition Parliament. And what say their petitions? That they are happy and prosperous? That they are satisfied with the results of the Act of 1833? . . . The very reverse . . . They complain that salt, the only condiment for their tasteless rice, and without which neither they nor their cattle can live, is a Government monopoly. They complain that 'the cost of each tool or implement of their trades, nay of their very knives, is frequently exceeded six times over by the moturjha (tax) under which the use of them is permitted. They complain that the Government is forcing drunkenness on them, 'vice' forbidden by Hindu and Mohammedan law.

Home Control—The Act of 1833 was proposed as a substitute for a constitution. It was then argued by Mr. Macaulay that if the people of India could not be entrusted safely with popular rights and privileges, there would at least be a constituency at Home bound by their own interests to watch over and protect them; a constituency which, to use his exact words, 'shall feel any disorder in the finances of India as the disorder of their own household affairs.' . . . Despite Indian deficits, English dividends of ten and a half per cent have been regularly maintained and 'well and truly paid'. And thus India has lost that English security for good government which Mr. Macaulay announced it was a design of the Act of 1833 to establish. . . . It was after the passing of the Act of 1833 that the Company deliberately took the step which had for its object the annexation of all the native states of India by any means—fair or foul—within their power.

It was no wonder then that the people should have risen against the Company in 1857 in an effort to restore indigenous self-rule in the country. And though the rebellion was suppressed the Company was also superseded. The Crown then became the owner of the Indian empire, the old order thus yielding place to new, not in substance, but in form.

"I can enjoy my friends, my bottle and all the necessaries of life for £400. Besides, when I get acquainted with the trade of this part of India, I shall make much greater advantages as I shall always be able to command a capital". So wrote MAJOR JAMES RENNELL, *appointed Surveyor-General of Bengal in 1764 at the age of 22 on an allowance of £900 and perquisites of £1,000 a year. In thirteen years he amassed a fortune and retired at the age of 35.*

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PESHWAS OF POONA

A. GENERAL SURVEY :
- TABLE OF PESHWAS.
- NARRATIVE.

B. SHIVAJI AND HIS SUCCESSORS :
- TABLE OF SHIVAJI'S LINE.
- SHIVAJI.
- SHAMBHAJI.
- RAJA RAM.
- SHAHUJI.
- LATER SUCCESSORS.
- KOLHAPUR BRANCH.

C. BALAJI VISHWANATH, FIRST PESHWA

D. BAJI RAO I, SECOND PESHWA

E. BALAJI BAJI RAO, THIRD PESHWA

F. MADHAV RAO I, FOURTH PESHWA

G. NARAIN RAO, FIFTH PESHWA

H. RAGHUNATH RAO, SIXTH PESHWA

I. MADHAV RAO II, SEVENTH PESHWA

J. CHIMNAJI APPA, EIGHTH PESHWA

K. BAJI RAO II, THE LAST PESHWA

ANNEXURE : *POONA AND THE SHANIWAR PALACE*

"The Marathas produced rulers and statesmen, soldiers and generals, judges and financiers, poets and writers ; among them not a few women also have distinguished themselves. They fought and conquered, and often suffered terrible reverses which they bore coolly and patiently. Their careers have not been stained by black deeds of cruelty or treachery. They treated opponents like true warriors with consideration and respect. We can find in Maratha history such brilliant names in various professions as . . . . . and very many others, who have illumined Maratha history with unforgettable achievements and cleverly handled all the varied concerns of a nation in power. For the most part they dealt moderately with outsiders and gave India inspiration and hope, driving away the gloom which had overcome all, by supplying, as it were, a practical lesson that even mighty kings could with success be resisted in their evil actions."

G. S. SARDESAI.*

*Main Currents of Maratha History (1949 edition), pages 181–82.

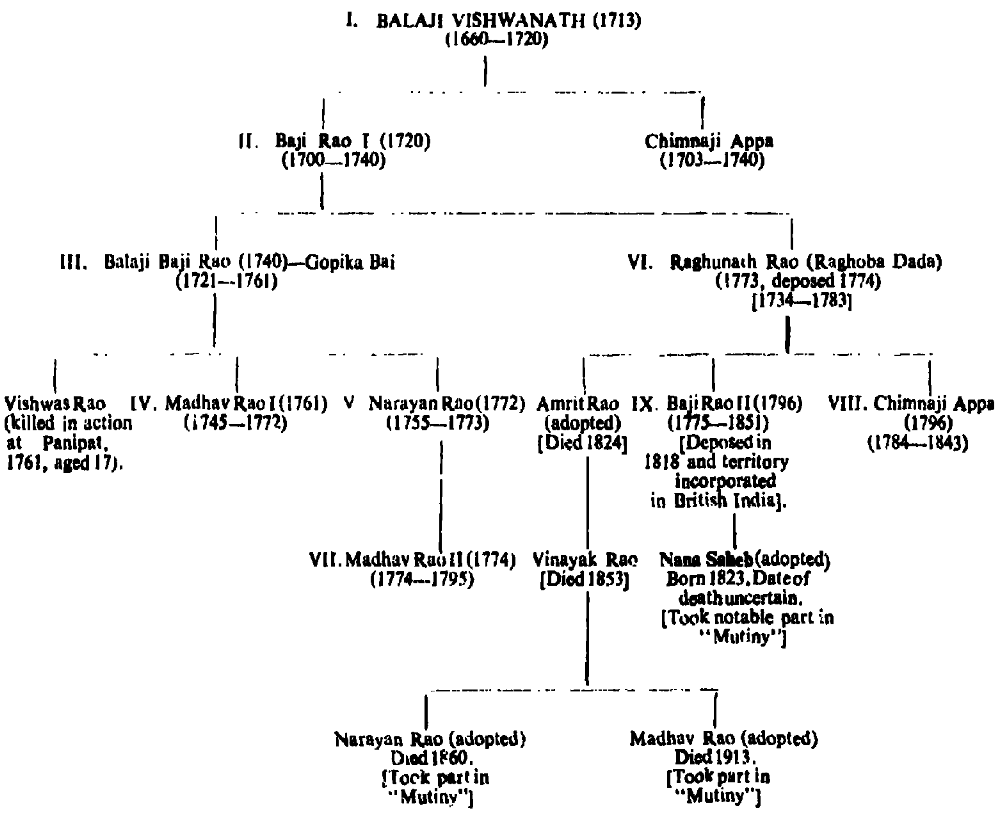
Note—Of the various causes of the rebellion of 1857 one was the liquidation of the Peshwaship of Poona in 1818 and the subsequent annexation by the British of the surviving principalities of Maratha chiefs. These chiefs were the rulers of Jhansi (in the north), Satara, Kolaba, Tanjore and the large Maratha State of Nagpur (in the south). These annexations took place between the years 1840 and 1855, mostly during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie. As a result, feelings of rancour were caused in the minds of many people, particularly the Marathas, and these bitter feelings were exhibited by some prominent members of that community, such as the Rani of Jhansi, the Nana Saheb, the Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope of Bithoor, Narain Rao and Madhav Rao† of Karvi (Banda) to mention a few examples. They seized the chance offered by 1857 in the last faint effort for the resuscitation of the Maratha power, and took a prominent part in the uprising.

A description of the rule of the Peshwas of Poona, as a preliminary to the life of Nana Saheb and the events of the great revolt is, therefore, being given in this chapter and in the next chapter (The last Peshwa Baji Rao II). Likewise, in chapter 8 (Baji Rao in exile at Bithoor) is being given an account of Baji Rao's life after he had ceased to be Peshwa.

A—GENERAL SURVEY

TABLE OF PESHWAS

The Roman figure before a name indicates the chronological order of Peshwas. The figure in brackets after the name is the year of accession. The figures below the names are the years of birth and death.



†They were grandsons of Amrit Rao (brother of the last Peshwa Baji Rao) who had surrendered to the British (prior to Baji Rao's surrender) on a guarantee of a pension of Rs.7 lakhs a year and who had settled at Karvi.

NARRATIVE

After the death of Shivaji in 1680, his dominions came into the hands of his son and successor, Shambhaji. Most of the possessions of Shambhaji were wrested from him by Aurangzeb, who took him prisoner and later put him to death. Afterwards, his son Shahuji was also captured and kept in long captivity in Aurangzeb's camp in the Deccan. On the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Shahuji, regaining his freedom, returned to his home-land. He found opposition in his cousin and his aunt, but eventually succeeded in recovering his rights through the ability of his minister, Balaji Vishwanath. But Shahuji was no more than a nominal head of the Marathas. He established himself at Satara and later his successors became the titular Rajas of Satara. The real authority amongst the Marathas remained with Balaji Vishwanath who was styled as the Peshwa or the first minister. Like other offices under the Maratha rule, the office of Peshwa also became hereditary and was held by persons belonging to the family of Balaji Vishwanath.

After the death of Shahuji in 1749, the Chhatrapatis* of Satara were gradually reduced to the position of hostages in the hands of the Peshwas who held them almost prisoners in the fort of Satara. The Chhatrapati received allowance for himself and his family from the Peshwas but these allowances were also gradually curtailed and further restrictions on their liberty were imposed. He had no duty to perform except to bestow the official robes of Peshwaship whenever a new Peshwa was installed.

The Peshwas exercised sovereign powers and were Kings in the parlance of political science. The Peshwa made war and peace himself (concluding treaties in his name) only reporting the accomplished fact to the sleeping nominal head at Satara as a mere form. Even that form came to be dropped after 1772, though the continuity of the tradition was respected on the accession of a new Peshwa by soliciting the robes of his office from the "Chhatrapati", the Raja of Satara.†

On the death of Balaji Vishwanath in 1720, the succession devolved on his son Bajee Rao, known in history as Bajee Rao I. He held the office for 20 years and proved to be a ruler of exceptional ability with the added qualities of a great general. He had three sons, Balaji Bajee Rao, Raghunath Rao (or Raghoba) and Shamsher Bahadur, the last being an illegitimate son by a Muslim lady. Bajee Rao died in 1740 on the bank of the Narbada while marching with his army to Northern India.

Balaji Bajee Rao, the eldest son of Bajee Rao, then succeeded to the office of Peshwa. He was commonly called Nana Saheb, but he is different from the Nana Saheb of 1857. The late Peshwa's dominions included territories in Bundelkhand also and these went to his third son, Shamsher Bahadur, whose descendants became the titular Nawabs of Banda. The Nawab of Banda took a prominent part in the "Mutiny". Raghoba, the second son of Bajee Rao, became the commander of the Peshwa's armies.

On the death of Balaji Baji Rao in 1761 the kingdom passed to his second surviving son, Madhav Rao, then aged 17. During his minority, his uncle, Raghoba, acted as regent. Madhav Rao was a ruler of great ability, but his career was cut short at the early age of 28 when he died of a malignant disease in 1772 without leaving a male issue. But before his death he had, with the concurrence of his ministers and the nobles of his court, nominated his younger brother, Narain Rao, to the Peshwa's musnad.

*The title of Chhatrapati descended from Shivaji to his successors.

†Sardesai's "New History of the Marathas" (first edition, 1948) Volume III, page 13, footnote.

At the time of his succession Narain Rao was a mere boy of 17. He was unable to manage the affairs of the kingdom and there were both discontent and intrigues amongst his people. Apprehensions about an attempt on his life were rife, but the young prince neither showed any uneasiness nor took even the most elementary precautions for his personal safety. His Ministers also were, for reasons of their own, culpably indifferent to protect the life of their master. The conspiracy which was being hatched for some time against this unfortunate head of a large and powerful kingdom culminated in a cruel and cold-blooded murder in August 1773, after a rule of some nine months only. This foul deed, which has blackened the pages of Maratha history more than any other occurrence, makes one hang his head in shame. It also sowed the seeds of disruption of the Maratha Kingdom which in consequence began to decline and ultimately went into the hands of the British in 1818.

The assassination of Peshwa Narain Rao was followed by disputes over the succession. Raghoba, who in the position of regent to Madhav Rao, had acquired a position of power and influence made endeavours to secure the Peshwaship for himself and succeeded in proclaiming himself as the holder of that office. Against him was the party of Ministers and influential noblemen who believed that he had a hand in the murder. This party was in favour of the widow of the deceased, by name Ganga Bai, who gave birth to a posthumous son, Madhav Rao Narayan. Raghoba, on his part, entered into negotiations with the British and concluded with them treaties for the consolidation of his power and rank. However, the succession of events in the south involving the Marathas, the Nizam, the Raja of Berar and Haider Ali obliged the British to abandon the cause of Raghoba. Therefore, in a subsequent treaty between the Marathas representing the young Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan (who had been put on the *gaddi* by the Ministers of his father) and the Company, it was provided that Raghoba shall receive only a monthly pension of Rs.25,000 from the Peshwa. This was the treaty of Salbai concluded in 1782. Raghoba died a few months afterwards.

Peshwa Madhav Rao Narayan (or Madhav Rao II) died in 1795 at the young age of 21. In a moment of desperation or in sick body and delirious mind, whatever it was, the young monarch jumped from a balcony of the palace in the court-yard below, was severely injured and died two days later. The question of succession again became a complicated matter and doubts arose about the continuance of the Marathas as the supreme power in South India. Eventually, however, Bajee Rao, the son of Raghoba, was installed as Peshwa. He is known in history as Bajee Rao II.

As a result of disputes with the East India Company which resulted in the virtual defeat of Bajee Rao's army, he had to surrender his dominions to the Company in return for an annual allowance of Rs. 8 lakhs. This was in May 1818. The surrender was made by Bajee Rao in the terms demanded by the Company because he had been reduced to extremities and had no alternative but to place himself at the generosity of the British.

One of the conditions imposed by these terms was that the ex-Peshwa would settle down either at Varanasi or at "any other sacred place in Hindostan, that the Governor General may, at his request, fix for his residence". Bajee Rao chose Bithoor, near Kanpur, and lived there in great pomp and show with the aid of his pension. There was also settled with him at Bithoor a large retinue of followers and dependants. A *jagir* was assigned to him at Bithoor and all persons residing within it were exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil and criminal courts of the Company.

Bajee Rao died in 1851 without leaving any male heir of his body. The institution of Peshwaship had already ended in 1818 on his

surrender to the British ; now on his death the title of Peshwa, though not formally recognised by the British Government, also came to an end. By his will, Bajee Rao had bequeathed all his property to his adopted son, Dhondu Pant Nana, popularly known as Nana Saheb and the Company recognised him as Bajee Rao's heir in respect of personal property. But Bajee Rao's pension was not continued to Nana Saheb nor was he allowed to succeed to his adoptive father's privileges, including immunity from process of British courts. The *jagir* at Bithoor, however, remained with Nana Saheb, but the residents of the *jagir*, including Nana Saheb himself and the surviving members of Bajee Rao's family, became subject to the jurisdiction of British courts both in civil and criminal matters. These incidents were some of the factors which influenced the course of events of 1857 and which have been described in later chapters.

B—SHIVAJI AND HIS SUCCESSORS

TABLE OF SHIVAJI'S LINE

- SHAHAJI (1594—1664)
  - SHIVAJI (1627—1680) Crowned Chhatrapati—1674).
    - Yesu Bai—Shambhaji (1657—1689) Crowned 1680.
      - Shahuji I. (1682—1749) (Crowned 1708).
    - Raja Ram—Tara Bai (1670—1700) Crowned 1689.
      - Shivaji II. (1696—1727) Crowned 1700. Deposed 1708. (Shahu taking his place).
        - Ram Raja (1727—1777) Crowned 1750.
          - Shahu II. (adopted) (1763—1808) Crowned 1777.
            - Pratap Sinh (1793—1847) Crowned 1808* Deposed 1839 by British.
            - Shahji Appa Saheb (1805—1848) Installed 1839. (On his dying childless Satara Raj was confiscated by British).

*In 1817 he joined Baji Rao II in the latter's war against the British and fell into British hands in February 1818. In anticipation of Baji Rao's surrender, the British re-installed him at Satara in April, 1818.

SHIVAJI

The history of the Peshwas is part of the history of Marathas which really begins with Shivaji. When Shivaji was born in April, 1627, the throne of Delhi was about to pass from Jahangir to Shahjahan with his headquarters at Agra. The Mughal empire was then in its ascendancy, with the whole of the northern India, together with Kabul and Kandhar, under its sway. But the Emperor's sovereignty in the South had never been fully acknowledged.

Shivaji's father, Shahaji, was originally a soldier in the army of Ahmadnagar. Gradually, his capabilities enabled him to achieve distinction and acquire a large jagir in that State, including the jagir near about Poona. After the annexation of Ahmadnagar by Shahjahan, he took up service under the Bijapur State in 1636. His fame grew here also and he acquired an extensive fief in the Karnatic while still retaining his old jagir of Poona. In the Karnatic he settled down with his second wife, leaving Shivaji and his mother, Jijabai, under an able guardian who also looked after his Poona *jagir*.

Shivaji began his early career with the small territory round Poona, the original holding of Shahaji. Without consulting his father and while still a boy, he began in 1646 to make raids in Bijapur territory acquiring several forts and building new ones. He soon came to possess a considerable estate protected by a chain of hill-forts. The Bijapur Government, suspecting that Shahaji was a privy to the adventures of his son, put him in confinement for four years. Shahaji made representations to the Emperor Shahjahan whereupon the ruler of Bijapur, Adil Shah Ali II, restored him to his lands in the Karnatic under fear of the Emperor's displeasure.

Shivaji was now extending his conquests in the Deccan and in the course of his operations came in conflict (1657) with Aurangzeb who was his father's viceroy in the Deccan in charge of the four provinces of Ahmadnagar, Khandesh, Berar and Telangana. In 1659, after Aurangzeb had returned to Agra on account of the Emperor's illness, the Sultan of Bijapur sent a large army under the noted general, Afzal Khan, to secure Shivaji, dead or alive. Then occurred the well-known duel between Shivaji and Afzal Khan in which the latter was killed.

A year later came the episode of Shaista Khan, the general whom Aurangzeb had sent to the Deccan as his viceroy. He gained some important initial successes over Shivaji and occupied Poona. Here he was surprised by Shivaji who, during a night, raided the abode of Shaista Khan. The general's three fingers were chopped off and his son killed, along with some others. It was by sheer luck that he himself succeeded in escaping death.

Shaista Khan was recalled; his place was taken by the Emperor's son, Prince Muazzam, who was later reinforced by Aurangzeb's great general and diplomat, Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur. Shivaji, unable to withstand their powerful attack, made a treaty in 1665 surrendering a number of forts and extensive lands. Shivaji faithfully fulfilled the terms of this treaty and also actively joined the Imperial army in the Bijapur campaign (1666) with 9,000 troops. Aurangzeb, impressed by this, sent him a letter of praise, a robe of honour and a jewelled dagger.

At the persuasion of Raja Jai Singh, Shivaji now went to Agra to meet the Emperor in person. There, events took a turn different from that which Shivaji had expected. Aurangzeb was annoyed and Shivaji was kept under surveillance from which he managed to make the escape so famous in history. After an absence of nine months and many adventures, Shivaji returned to his homeland in December, 1666.

For three years after his return, Shivaji remained at peace with the Mughals consolidating his territories and organizing his administration. He received from

Aurangzeb the title of Raja and a jagir in Berar. For reasons into which we need not go hostilities between the parties were renewed in 1670 and Shivaji reconquered his lost forts and territories.

Shivaji, now in a position of great power, decided to proclaim himself as an independent sovereign with the style of "Chhatrapati", ruling by his own right. The coronation took place in June, 1674. This made a striking impression on the masses and drew round Shivaji, now Chhatrapati, all the varied elements of the Maratha State and provided a focus for their loyalties to a formal Head of State. The chief priest who officiated at the ceremony was Gaga Bhatt and it is said that he it was who had suggested that Shivaji should be formally crowned as king. His argument was that as "Shivaji had subdued four Badshahis, possessed 75,000 cavalry, infantry, forts and strongholds, but no throne, the Maratha Raja should be crowned Chhatrapati".

The ceremony of crowning was most elaborate and gorgeous. Assembled at it were 50,000 learned Brahmans besides holy men, sanyasis and many others who for four months were fed and maintained. At the end of the ceremony, money, ornaments and clothes were bestowed to everyone. Each one of his eight Pradhans received a cash reward of Rs.3,50,000 and robes, an elephant and a horse. The total expenditure was of the order of rupees five crores.

The representatives of the East India Company were also present and were shown great courtesy and consideration. They were greatly impressed by the grandeur of the whole affair.

With the crown on his head, Shivaji was now a formally *abhishikta* Raja which secured to him the privileges and sanctions of royalty and the veneration due to a regularly crowned monarch. After the coronation he announced his policy of administering speedy and impartial justice to all according to established traditions and thus bringing the blessings of God on the ruled and the ruler.

Shivaji's life is full of many daring exploits and adventures which read more like a page from a novel than a page of history. During his whole life-time he was engaged in building up and extending his dominions. He had little time to consolidate them. His conquests were scattered in outlying regions and part of his territory included only *chauth*-paying areas, that is, areas which he did not himself administer, but from the rulers of which he levied *chauth* contributions. His dominions were thus a sort of fluctuating and fluid area. This area which lay on the western coast of India round about Poona included 240 forts of which Shivaji himself had built 111. His annual revenue from his possessions and from the *chauth* was assessed at Rs.7 crores, but the actual realisation was much less. He also collected large amounts of treasure and other valuable articles, the value of which has not been computed.*

Though Shivaji was mostly occupied in warfare, both defensive and offensive, and in collecting funds for his troops, he also evolved, and this is proof of his great genius, certain broad principles of administration which were followed by his officers. Of these, mention may be made of the following :

(a) Services rendered were to be paid in cash and not by grant of land, except in the case of shrines, both Hindu and Muslim. Shivaji was so greatly averse to this system that he declined to give a jagir to one of his sons-in-law who had earned recognition by his good services and to whom he sent this letter : "Our Maratha government does not allow grants of land to anybody. But recognizing your good work for the

*Sardesai, Volume 1, pages 271–72.

State and in addition the family relationship we bear with your house, we will think of bestowing the Dabhol Deshmukhi* on the son of our affectionate daughter, Raj Kuwar, when she gets one.†

(b) Merit was to be the criterion for choosing servants of the State. Shivaji recognized no hereditary officers. (This principle was followed by Shivaji's successors for sometime, but later an exception was made in the case of the Prime Minister, the Peshwa, whose office became hereditary on account of the good services rendered by the first and the second Peshwas.)

(c) Revenue was not to be collected through zamindars, but through the Government agency.

(d) Equal opportunity was given in the public service to all castes.

(e) Expenditure was to be so budgeted as to lay by some surplus every year.

Space does not permit even a passing account of the organization of Shivaji's army, navy and military establishment, the rules of conduct which he laid down for his soldiers and the methods of carrying on warfare, the building of forts and all other matters connected with State-craft. Suffice it to say that in all the departments of State Shivaji looked to the minutest details and gave comprehensive instructions. But while he was so scrupulous in these matters he was averse to pomp and show. "The camp of Shivaji was without pomp, without women; there were no baggages, only two tents, but of simple cloth, coarse and very scanty, one for him and the other for his Prime Minister", so writes the French Envoy Germain who visited Shivaji's camp in July, 1677.‡

With an attractive personality, Shivaji was a man of extraordinary abilities combining in him the qualities of a remarkable leader of men, a great military genius, a master strategist, an administrator of rare wisdom and foresight, a devout patriot and above all a man full of spiritual fervour and fear of God, with a high reputation for the purity of his life. He was much in advance of the times in which he lived. "Like the first Napoleon, Shivaji in his time was a great organiser and a builder of civil institutions. These institutions deserve special study because they display an originality and breadth of conception which he could not have derived from the system of Government then prevalent under Mahomedan or Hindu rule." (Justice Ranade in Rise of the Maratha Power). He constituted a regular Board of Administration known as the *Ashta Pradhan* consisting of eight functionaries whose designations in Persian and Sanskrit were as follows :

(1) Peshwa or Mukhya Pradhan, the Prime Minister, who was next to the King, was the head of both the civil and the military administration.

(2) Muzmudar or Amatya, Revenue Minister.

(3) Surnis or Sachiva, Finance Minister.

(4) Waqe Navis or Mantri, Personal Adviser, Home Member or Chief Secretary.

(5) Sarnaubat or Senapati, Commander-in-Chief.

(6) Dabir or Sumant, Foreign Minister.

(7) Nyayadhish, Chief Justice.

(8) Panditrao, Minister for Religion.

The first four had their seats on the right side below the throne, the last four on

*An office of importance under Shivaji.

†Sardesai, Volume I page 278.

‡Sardesai, Volume I, page 279

the left. The salary of the Peshwa was about Rs.52,000 a year, of the Revenue Minister about Rs.42,000. The last six drew Rs.35,000.*

These functionaries had specific duties assigned to them, but in keeping with the practice of the rulers of those days, the ultimate decision in matters of importance rested with Shivaji himself who over-ruled them not unoften. It was only when he was away from headquarters that the Peshwa had some autonomous authority and a voice in day-to-day matters.

He was intensely religious, with no tinge of bigotry in him, and this gave a sublime spirituality to his character. In this trait was perhaps to be found the reason which prevented him in his career of conquest from perpetrating those atrocities with which the name of many a conqueror or warrior is associated in world's history. Never in his hour of triumph did he allow his men to dishonour women or desecrate places of worship, whatever be the creed to which they appertained. His behaviour to the vanquished was far above the standards of the day when there was nothing like the Geneva Conventions,† and even his Muslim opponents acknowledged his good treatment of women and children who fell into his hands. His personal life was free from those irregularities which except for his great opponent Aurangzeb were almost the custom of the great of those times.

Shivaji was a man of great catholicity. Though devoted to the religion of Vedas, he was not against any other religion and in fact greatly respected Muslim institutions and never allowed a mosque to be destroyed. He used to respect the holy Qoran whenever copies came in his possession during his conquests—these he returned with due reverence to the proper persons. Many Muslim shrines were the objects of his bounty—they received grants from him. Amongst his officials, several Muslims occupied important positions. In his immediate personal establishment also there were those who professed Islam. Thus, Hiroji Farzand was a trusted personal servant of his. This man had later helped Shivaji in escaping from Aurangzeb's custody at great risk to his own life. He slept in Shivaji's bed, after the latter had escaped, so as to avoid suspicion until Shivaji had passed beyond the Emperor's reach. Had Farzand been caught while in bed, he would have been tortured to death as a privy to the plot. He, however, managed to escape after some hours.

One of the great contributions which Shivaji made to Indian nationhood was the creation of the Maratha people with a new life and it was this life which enabled them to bring almost the whole country under a single government of the Peshwas of Poona for a hundred years.

At the age of 53, Shivaji died in 1680 without nominating a successor. He left two sons, Shambhaji and Raja Ram. None of them had the qualities which distinguished their father and there was a great set-back to Maratha affairs on Shivaji's death. Eventually, however, Shambhaji succeeded to his dominions and was crowned "Chhatrapati". His administration had many defects and many a people who had flourished during the time of his father could not carry on with him. He even went to the extent of humiliating them, thus causing dissensions

*Sardesai, Volume I, pages 215.

†At present there are four Geneva Conventions which were established at Geneva on August 12, 1949, by the "Diplomatic Conference for the Establishment of International Conventions for the Protection of Victims of War" and at which 63 Governments were represented They deal with (a) the wounded and sick combatants, (b) ship-wrecked members of armed forces, (c) treatment of prisoners of war, and (d) protection of civilians in time of war. These Conventions (in 429 articles) are the gradual development of the original "Geneva Convention" which was established in 1864 by the International Committee of the Red Cross. It provided only for combatants, as at that time it was considered evident that civilians would remain outside the hostilities.

in the State. While this trouble was going on internally, Aurangzeb found that with the departure of Shivaji his opportunity for crushing the Marathas and extending his sway over the Deccan had come. He himself proceeded to accomplish this task and eventually was able to capture Shambhaji whom he put to a cruel death. Afterwards he succeeded in capturing Shambhaji's wife and his son Shahuji who were kept prisoners in his encampments in the Deccan for a long time.

SHAMBHAJI

As already stated Shivaji did not nominate his successor when he died in 1680. Of his two sons, Shambhaji was the elder being 22 years old and Raja Ram, the younger, who was running his tenth year. Normally, Shambhaji should have received the succession, but the snag arose from the fact that Shambhaji had incurred the extreme displeasure of his father sometime before the latter's death. Shivaji had lost all trust in him and actually kept him confined in a fort away from his capital. The death of Shivaji had taken place at Raigad, the capital of his kingdom. Raja Ram and his mother, Soyara Bai, were with him. Raja Ram had the full affections of his father, and Soyara Bai who was Shambhaji's step-mother had been carefully making contrivances to ensure that her son should succeed to the kingdom in preference to the legitimate claim of Shambhaji. She now found an opportunity and with the help of Shivaji's confidential secretary placed Raja Ram on the throne immediately on the conclusion of the mourning period.

In the meanwhile, Shambhaji in his confinement learnt about his father's death and the accession of Raja Ram. Shambhaji managed to escape and with the help of some supporters and a force of 20,000 men marched on Raigad. Meeting with no resistance he occupied the capital in June, 1680. In the following July he assumed his father's title of Chhatrapati. Raja Ram and his mother were kept in confinement. But the formal coronation ceremony did not take place until January, 1681.

A few months after the coronation, there arrived at Shambhaji's court the young Prince Akbar after raising an unsuccessful revolt against his father, the Emperor Aurangzeb. This Prince was greatly loved by the Emperor and had been deputed by him in 1679 to fight against the rulers of Rajputana. The Prince was unable to subdue the Rajputs and was himself exposed to heavy odds and suffered terrible losses. With no alternative he made peace with them and asked the Emperor to confirm the terms. Upon this Aurangzeb got enraged and sent a harsh letter to Akbar scolding him in severe terms. The father's rebuke touched the heart of the young Prince to the degree of making him openly revolt. The famous Durga Das sided with the Prince who now proclaimed himself as Emperor of Hindustan in January 1681. Aurangzeb found himself in a very difficult position being in danger of capture by Akbar and the valiant Rajputs who were helping him with all their resources and who was now marching at the head of the Rajput army to hold his father. The old Emperor, however, was able to make effective plans to meet the threat and succeeded in defeating the Prince who along with Durga Das fled towards the south, the other directions of escape being blocked.

Prince Akbar now proceeded to take shelter in the court of Shambhaji. It was in these unusual circumstances that Aurangzeb's son joined Shambhaji, the son of Aurangzeb's bitterest enemy. Now both began to make preparations for the down-fall of the Emperor. In this connection a letter sent by Akbar to Shambhaji on May 9, 1681, will be found interesting : "Since his coming to the throne, my father, the Emperor Aurangzeb, has formed the deliberate resolution of putting down the Hindus. This is whole sole cause of his war against the Rajputs. While in the eyes of God all men

are His equal children and deserve impartial protection from the ruler, I became convinced that by such extreme measures, my father would lose his hold on the country and decided to oppose him in this disastrous move. I am, therefore, coming to you as a friend, as your kingdom is out of the Emperor's reach. The valiant Durga Das Rathor accompanies me. Please do not entertain any false suspicion about my intentions. If by the grace of God I succeed in my endeavour to depose my father, I shall remain only the nominal master and shall let you exercise all the powers. We shall fully co-operate in putting down the Emperor. More when we meet in person."*

Leaving this episode here, a brief account ought now to be given of Shambhaji's actions on gaining power. For various reasons Shambhaji was disliked by everyone ever since the days of his father. This proved a great handicap when he became the ruler, for it was only at the point of the sword that he could have his orders obeyed. He had no good friend or well-wisher to advise him in matters of administration. To make matters worse an unsuccessful attempt to poison him was made in August 1681. Thereupon he put to death all those whom he suspected as having a hand in the plot, including his step-mother Soyara Bai. He had many persons of the side of Soyara Bai's father also mercilessly slaughtered. For three months during August to October 1681 he continued to take vengeance and perpetrate cruel deeds. The entire atmosphere about him became charged with suspicion. His servants and others round him began to hate him inwardly and none had any real sympathy for him. He continued to be possessed by the fury which the plot to poison him had caused and he could not, till he lived, get the better of his inflamed feelings. It was in this state of mind that he was eventually captured by Aurangzeb who had him put to a humiliating and cruel death in 1689.

Having become distrustful of the able officers of his father, he could not find anyone to help him in the affairs of his kingdom. In the end, he found an adviser in a person belonging to North India, named Kavi Kalash who had come to the court of his father to be employed in teaching Sanskrit to young Shambhaji. Though he was a scholar and poet of repute, Kavi Kalash had no administrative capacities and was foreigner to the country of the Marathas. The result was mal-administration under an incapable ruler and a more incapable minister.

Now, while Prince Akbar and Shambhaji were making plans for an attack on the Emperor, Aurangzeb was not sitting idle. He had already been thinking of bringing the whole of the Indian continent under his sway and this meant the subjugation of the Deccan which his ancestors had been trying unsuccessfully to conquer. Shivaji was now dead and Aurangzeb was confident of having an easy conquest of the south. While he was thinking on these lines, Prince Akbar's rebellion took place and, as we have seen, the rebel Prince was now collaborating with Shambhaji to overthrow the Emperor. So it was that, after having sent an advance party under his second son, Azam Shah, Aurangzeb started for the Deccan in September 1681 and finally took up his residence at Aurangabad in the following March. In the beginning Aurangzeb had to face great difficulties and discomfiture and at one time was in imminent danger of being overpowered by the Marathas. His troops were also panicky no less than his generals who at all times feared some sudden attack on their camp. For quite a time the Emperor was in the loss of the presence of his mind and did not know how to extricate himself from the situation.

*Sardesai, Volume I, pages 295-6

Eventually, he was able to muster courage and infuse his generals with a spirit of adventure and self-reliance. He occupied himself both against the Marathas and the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golcunda.

In the meanwhile, there was estrangement between King Shambhaji and Prince Akbar, the latter having now discovered that he was in the company of a shaky and intemperate ruler wholly different from his famous father, the great Shivaji. Prince Akbar was also seized of the fear of capture by his father and the fate that would then await him. In disgust he gave up all his plans and became a wanderer. And ultimately he found his way to Iran, reaching there in 1688 to die in 1704, broken-hearted. Aurangzeb had been in correspondence with him promising forgiveness, and earnestly desiring him to return. But the unfortunate Prince preferred exile and tribulations to accepting the entreaties of his father for whom he had neither love nor respect. He also ignored the implorations of his sister and friends.

As for Durga Das, he was now left with no hope of standing against Aurangzeb's might and so after having said good-bye to Akbar in 1687, when Akbar took the British steamer at Rajapur in February of that year for his voyage to Ispahan in Iran, returned to Jodhpur. He took with him Akbar's son, Buland Akbar, and his daughter Safiat-un-nisa. While organizing the Rajputs, the chivalrous Durga Das bestowed great care and solicitude for the young prince and the princess whom he regarded as a sacred trust. He employed a Muslim theologian to instruct them in their own faith.

When Aurangzeb came to know about the flight of Akbar to Iran he effected a reconciliation with Durga Das in 1696. Durga Das met the Emperor at Brahmapuri and handed the princess to him. History preserves the following dialogue between the grand-father and the grand-daughter :

"Aurangzeb : As you have passed your life among non-Muslims, you must be altogether ignorant of our faith. So you must at once start the study of Qoran.

"Safiat : You are wrong, grand papa. The revered Durga Das not only provided for all my physical comforts, but also employed a Muslim lady to teach me religion. I know all the Qoran by heart.

"Aurangzeb : Oh, how good of Durga Das. How do you think I should reward him for all his services ?

"Safiat : Ask Ishwar Das* about it and he will tell you."†

Afterwards Prince Buland Akbar was also restored by Durga Das to the Emperor. Durga Das lived long after the death of Aurangzeb. He is famous in Rajputana for his chivalry and organisation of the Rajputs. Durga Das himself received singular honours from the successors of Aurangzeb. The name of Durga Das—"the flower of Rajput chivalry"—is a house-hold word amongst Rajputs who in their prayer for the valour of their sons desire that they should be as brave as Durga Das.

Shambhaji had many engagements with the troops of Aurangzeb who had laid a net-work to capture him. His losses were severe and his fate was sealed in 1687 with the loss of his Commander-in-Chief, Hambir Rao, who fell fighting. He was also deserted by most of his followers and was now virtually surrounded by swarms of Moghal parties. Shambhaji's only support now was Kavi

*This Ishwar Das was a trusted agent of Aurangzeb and had been deputed to act as an intermediary between the Emperor and Durga Das. He has written a full history of Aurangzeb's life in the Deccan.

†Sardesai, Volume 1, pages 311–312.

Kalash. Through the treachery of some of his own servants news of Shambhaji's movements now began to reach Aurangzeb.

Suddenly on a night in February 1689, Shambhaji and Kavi Kalash were captured by Sheikh Nizam and immediately taken to the Emperor's camp. By his orders the captives were subjected to great ridicule. They were dressed as buffoons in long fool's caps with bells round them, were mounted on camels and paraded to the view of thousands of spectators.

Next day, Aurangzeb sent a message to Shambhaji promising to spare his life on certain conditions which included the surrender of his forts and the disclosure of his treasures and the names of those Muslim nobles and generals of the Emperor who had helped him. But Shambhaji was full of bitterness at the public humiliation done to him. He was already an embittered man on account of the intrigues in his own family and court which had resulted in the attempt at poisoning and in consequence of which he had taken atrocious vengeance on all and sundry. He was thus in no mood of reason, and driven to desperation, not only declined the Emperor's offer, but also abused him. In order to insult the Emperor further he asked for one of Aurangzeb's daughters as the price of his friendship ! No one dared to convey the words of the prisoner to the Emperor ; only vague hints of the purport of what he had said were conveyed to Aurangzeb who could not tolerate this open insult. And he had him blinded the same night. The next day,the tongue of Kavi Kalash was cut out as he too had taken part in the abuse. Both were tortured and humiliated for a fortnight after which they were put to a cruel death on March 11, 1689, at the banks of river Bhima—their limbs were cut and thrown to dogs. Their severed heads, stuffed with straw, were exhibited in the principal towns of the Deccan.

Writes Sardesai : "Thus perished the second Maratha Chhatrapati, accomplishing by his death, as the sequel will show, the task of destroying Aurangzeb's hopes and conquests which his own short life had in vain tried to bring about. The fearless manner in which he met his end united and steeled the heart of the Maratha nation as nothing else would have done and nerved them to avenge the death of their sovereign."*

RAJA RAM

At the time of Shambhaji's capture, Raja Ram, aged 19, was in nominal confinement at the fort of Raigad. He was proclaimed King on February 9, 1689, that is a week after Shambhaji had been captured. Thereupon, Aurangzeb ordered one of his commanders to proceed to Raigad to capture the new Maratha King. There was little hope of that fort resisting the strong army of Aurangzeb and the saintly Yesu Bai, Shambhaji's widowed queen and a wise and patriotic lady, suggested that Raja Ram with his wives (Tara Bai, Rajas Bai and Ambika Bai) should secretly escape from the fort. This was done and Yesu Bai, with her son Shahuji, stayed back in the fort so as to avoid suspicion on the part of the besiegers.

After Raja Ram's escape the Marathas began to harass the Moghal detachments here and there and one night raided the Emperor's whole camp at Koragaon. They cut the ropes of the royal tent causing the huge cloth edifice to come down in a crash killing the inmates. It was by sheer luck that Aurangzeb, who was not then in that tent, escaped being crushed to death along with other inmates, though it was at first supposed that he too had been killed.

In the meanwhile it was eight months that the siege of Raigad was in progress without any hope of its being captured, such was its natural defence and the strength of its fortification which Shivaji himself had ingeniously devised in its construction. It

*Sardesai, Volume I, page 316.

was in November 1689 that a treacherous officer defending the fort opened the gates on promise of reward from the Mughal general. Yesu Bai, widow of Shambhaji, with her young son, Shahu, was captured and taken to the Emperor.

The Marathas under Raja Ram continued to fight the Mughal army, but without any decisive results; sometimes the Mughals were routed and dispersed and at others the Marathas. The Mughals were completely tired of their inconvenient life in the Deccan camps and more than once Aurangzeb was approached to return to Agra or Delhi after making up with the Marathas. But Aurangzeb in his obstinacy preferred all the trials and tribulations which he shared with others rather than leave the task unfinished. Then when the odds were seriously against him and the Marathas were becoming triumphant, a sudden blow was received by the Marathas in the death of King Raja Ram. His delicate constitution could not stand the hardship of camp life and he died on March 2, 1700 at the age of 30. One of his wives, Ambika Bai, became sati on hearing of her husband's death.

Raja Ram had died a month after establishing his new capital at Satara. He had to leave Satara which was invested by the Mughals and went to Singhgad where death overtook him. His widow, Tara Bai, now had her young son, then four years old, proclaimed as Chhatrapati under the style of Shivaji II. In his name she carried on the administration with ability and rare power of organization. She continued the wars against Aurangzeb, causing him severe losses. In the words of Sardesai: "She deserves all the credit for the Maratha nation's emerging successful out of the dreadful war with power to control the destiny of India during the eighteenth century. The great ability of Tara Bai is attested to even by Muslim writers. She constantly moved from fort to fort directing operations and inspiring her followers."*

SHAHUJI

Reverting now to the captivity of Shahuji and his mother, Yesu Bai, in Aurangzeb's camp, it should first be stated that at the time of capture at Raigad in November 1689 he was only 7 years of age, his mother running in her 30th year. They remained in captivity for 17 long years, with them being about 200 men and women who had been captured with them. Among these was Rani Sakwar Bai, the sole surviving widow of Shivaji. The captives all through were in constant fear of their future at the hands of Aurangzeb who used to blind an enemy, convert him to his faith or imprison him for life. Young Shahuji had constantly to undergo privation and hardships attending the camp life, in addition to being a closely-watched prisoner.

Aurangzeb could not solve the problem which had been created by Shahuji having become his prisoner. He did not know how to deal with him or what to do with him. He certainly did not entertain the idea of putting him to death as he feared that such a course would cause still greater bitterness in the hearts of the Marathas than had been caused by the cruelty which he had adopted in taking the life of his father, Shambhaji. Moreover, the young Prince, his mother and followers were all innocent and had personally done him no harm. He, therefore, decided merely to hold him under captivity and to use him as an instrument to crush the Marathas. He gave him the title of Raja and bestowed on him the dignity of the Commander of 7,000 troops. As for his personal comforts, the task was passed on to Aurangzeb's daughter, Zinat-un-Nisa Begum, who was in charge of the Emperor's domestic affairs in the Deccan. She was now a lady in her 47th year, un-married and kind-hearted. Shahuji and his mother received

*Sardesai, Volume 1, page 861.

the tender treatment of this pious lady and between them they developed homely love and affection.

The tent of Shahu and his mother used to be pitched near Zinat-un-Nisa's own tent which in its turn adjoined the Emperor's. For their followers, a separate tent was pitched at a distance.

But while the rigours of camp were thus softened for Shahuji by the benevolence of Zinat-un-Nisa, he could receive no education nor could attain accomplishments belonging to a free Prince. Within the limits of the camp he used to do riding and practising swordsmanship. He obtained no knowledge of the Hindu scriptures ; on the other hand he knew more about Muslim mythology than about his own. He also developed a tender temperament, God-fearing and always keen to avoid vicious things. He was allowed freely to participate in the camp life which was quite varied and interesting with plenty of thrilling experiences now and then.

While all this was going on the Emperor was still pondering on the course of action he should adopt regarding Shahuji. In the monsoon months of 1703 the Emperor was encamping at Poona and there his mind was seriously agitated. In that condition he issued orders for Shahuji's conversion to Islam and a day was fixed for the purpose. Distressed at this, Shahuji and his mother began to starve themselves and begged the magnanimity of the Begum Saheba, the kind-hearted Zinat-un-Nisa, to plead with the Emperor for the cancellation of the order. Aurangzeb yielded to spare Shahuji on the condition that two prominent youths offered themselves for conversion in his place, meaning that his order once issued must have its course. Thereupon, Shahuji was able to persuade two young men, his companions in captivity, to offer themselves for the sacrifice. Their conversion was accordingly done and these youths, who were the sons of Shivaji's Senapati, Pratap Rao Gujar, were given the names of Abdul Rahim and Abdul Rehman in place of their original names of Khandoji and Jagjiwan respectively. Their self-sacrifice is a unique record of loyalty and devotion to their master.

Shortly afterwards in November 1703, Aurangzeb found two suitable brides from respectable Maratha families to whom Shahu was married with due ceremony in the camp. The Emperor now showed deep interest in the affairs of Shahuji and began to think of releasing him to take his rightful place on the Maratha throne, but for certain reasons his project did not materialise.

Before he could settle the affairs of Shahu, Aurangzeb, now old and infirm, died in February 1707 while still in the Deccan. Though the ruler of a mighty empire and a remarkable figure in history, he died a completely broken down man. The tragic account of his last days can be read in other works.

Aurangzeb's funeral rites were performed at Ahmadnagar by his second surviving son. Azam Shah. On March 5, Azam Shah proclaimed himself Emperor and started on the journey to the north with all his camp. Simultaneously, from Lahore started his elder brother, Shah Alam, to contest the throne. During the march, Shahu detached himself from Azam Shah's camp in Malwa in May 1707, it being a matter of controversy amongst the historians whether he obtained Azam Shah's permission to leave (leaving a small party, including his mother and wife, as hostages in case he took a hostile attitude on return home) or whether he slipped away surreptitiously. It is said that the terms of release, which prior to his actual quitting the camp were under discussion with Azam Shah, were that he was to rule his territories as a vassal of the Emperor, that he was to serve that empire with troops when so called upon and that he could collect *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from the six Mughal provinces of the south. These terms were, however, incorporated in formal sanads granted to Shahu many

years afterwards in 1719 by the Emperor Mohammad Shah.

As for Azam Shah himself he was killed in the battle for succession with Shah Alam in June 1707 at Agra. The latter now became emperor assuming the title of Bahadur Shah. He died in February 1712.

Shahu was welcomed in his homeland as the legitimate claimant to Shivaji's throne. With the help of his supporters, he collected troops and in August 1707, went to Ahmadnagar with hopes of proceeding to the Maharashtra capital at Satara. But Tara Bai repudiated the claims of Shahu, saying that he had no right to the throne because the kingdom of his late father had been lost by him on his capture by Aurangzeb and that the present territories were a new acquisition made by her husband Raja Ram and which had now descended to her son Shivaji II who had been crowned a few years ago. Tara Bai actually marched with a powerful army against Shahu who now retired towards Poona, and at Khed was confronted with Tara Bai's army ready for attack. Shahu knew that he could not stand the onslaught of this army and took to diplomatic means to win over the supporters of Tara Bai. His charming personality and purity of heart brought several influential adherents of Tara Bai to his side. The battle which thereafter took place was but a sham contest and soon the field was in the hands of Shahu.

Shahu then proceeded to Satara which he entered in December 1707, within seven months of his leaving the Mughal camp. The coronation ceremony was soon performed in the coming January. It was with great moderation that Shahu began his long reign of forty years. He led a life of simplicity and piety with good-will towards all and these qualities are to this day associated with his name in the whole of Maharashtra.

The events of Shahuji's reign are part of the history of the earlier Peshwas and will be briefly touched upon in the sections relating to them.

LATER SUCCESSORS.

Shahuji was succeeded by Ram Raja who died in 1777 after having adopted a son who now succeeded him in the name of Shahu II. He took up his office with strong hopes of serving the Maratha State and improving his own lot as a ruler. He was, however, soon disillusioned and found that he was looked upon by the Peshwa's Government as a costly appendage ; reduction was also made in the allowances which he received from Poona. The terms between him and the Peshwa were greatly embittered.

On his death in 1808, King Shahu II was succeeded by his son Pratap Sinh. He was a minor at the time and his mother acted as his regent and guardian. But both of them failed to receive the good graces of the Peshwa and continued to suffer the rigours of their life. In 1817, Bajee Rao took King Pratap Sinh along with him in his running fight with the British. On his severe defeat in February 1818, Bajee Rao managed to escape capture, but Pratap Sinh fell into British hands.

In the meanwhile the fort of Satara had also been captured by the British. In a diplomatic move to undo Bajee Rao, the British announced that, after Bajee Rao had been liquidated, Pratap Sinh would be reinstalled at Satara. Accordingly, just before his surrender the British put Pratap Sinh as the Raja of Satara on April 10, 1818. In the beginning the administration was for some two and a half years carried on by Capt. Grant* as the Resident and his guardian. In 1822 he was invested with the powers of administration.

The territory under his rule was small equalling the present district of Satara.

*This was the future historian who, under the name of Grant Duff, wrote the famous History of Marathas.

He administered it with great ability as proof of which may be mentioned the fact that with a net revenue of only Rs.14 lakhs a year, he spent, during the twenty years of his administration, not less than Rs.40 lakhs on works of public utility alone. He delighted in helping the poor and the oppressed and faithfully observed his religious duties.

Possessed of a sharp intellect and uncommon address, Pratap Sinh was an impressive personality with the British who made him a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of England. The Governors of Bombay used to pay visits to Pratap Sinh and often complimented him on his progressive rule. The authorities of the East India Company in England sent for presentation to him a jewelled sword and a certificate in 1835, but these remained undelivered as the relations between him and the Governor of Bombay had in the meanwhile become strained. In the result, he was charged with sedition for attempting to overthrow the British Government and was deposed in September 1839 without being given an opportunity to explain things. He was sent to live at Varanasi where he died in October 1847.

After deposing Pratap Sinh, the British put his younger brother Shahji Appa Saheb in his place. He died childless in April 1848 whereupon the British annexed the Satara Raj. The annexation of Satara was one of the predisposing causes of the revolt of 1857.

KOLHAPUR BRANCH

This branch of the Chhatrapatis started from Shambhaji II, a son of Raja Ram by his junior queen, Rajas Bai, the senior queen being Tara Bai. Before his death, Shahu had left a deed giving the Peshwa supreme power in the State with certain reservations. The Peshwa was to perpetuate the name of the Raja of Satara and to preserve the dignity of the house of Shivaji through his descendants. He was also required to regard the Kolhapur State as independent and recognise the existing rights of the Jagirdars with whom he could enter into necessary arrangements.

In 1714 Rajas Bai contrived to put Tara Bai and her son Shivaji in confinement and to place her own son Shambhaji in the Chhatrapati's seat with the title of Shambhaji II. Shambhaji established his seat at Kolhapur. There were thus rivalries between Shambhaji II and Shahuji, but this declined as time passed. A fight, however, took place between the two rulers in which Shambhaji was defeated. But in his magnanimity, Shahu gave generous terms to Shambhaji by the treaty of Warna in 1731 which formed the foundation charter of the house of Kolhapur.

While Satara had been confiscated as we have already seen the Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur managed to maintain their principality until the achievement of Indian independence when Kolhapur was merged in the State of Bombay.

C—BALAJI VISHWANATH

FIRST PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
About 1660.	1720.	1713 *till death.*

Amongst those who had been helpful to Shahuji in occupying the throne at Satara, Balaji Vishwanath was one. This gentleman was now appointed to the post of Sena Karte (Organiser of Forces), a new office which overlapped the office of Commander-in-Chief. In that capacity, Balaji did yeoman's service by organising things and

creating loyalty amongst the population for the new chief. His efficiency was remarkable and Shahu made him the Peshwa or the Prime Minister within a few years. In this capacity Balaji changed the whole character of Government which in course of time eclipsed the personality of Chhatrapati himself. Shahuji was by nature ease-loving, but without the vices of luxury and neither dash nor ambition to command. Balaji Peshwa fitted admirably into his natural temperament and the Chhatrapati left things almost entirely to the Peshwa who gradually became the *de facto* ruler of the Marathas.

Little is known of the early life and career of this famous figure of Indian history who founded a powerful ruling dynasty. His ancestors were Deshmukhs of Shrivardhan on the West Coast in the territory of Nizamshahi Kings of Ahmadnagar and, after its extinction, of the Emperor of Delhi. The family belonged to a special class (Chitpawan) of Maharashtra Brahmans reputed for their uncommon intelligence and piety. Balaji started his career as a clerk under the Marathas during the time of Shambhaji. For twelve years, 1695—1707, he was Sarsubah of the districts of Poona and Daulatabad. It has been suggested that when Aurangzeb was conducting his campaigns in the Deccan, Balaji became acquainted with many Mughal officers and had also possibly come to the notice of the Begum Zinat-un-Nisa, the Emperor's daughter. Also, that he had, with the approval of the Begum, established contact with the captive Shahu and conveyed to him news of the outside world. It is also probable that he was consulted by the Emperor in selecting brides for Shahu. It was thus that Balaji had come to gain the favour of the future Chhatrapati. In 1773, Shahu was being harassed by Kanhoji Angre, a powerful chief on the Western Coast and the head of a navy. He captured several forts belonging to Shahu and began to extend help to Tarabai. Shahu then sent against Kanhoji his Peshwa Bahiro Pant who was seized. Shahu then asked Balaji to proceed against Angre saying that if he succeeded he would be made Peshwa. Balaji then replied that his mission would be really effective if he went as the accredited Peshwa with powers to decide important issues at the spot. He added that Kanhoji should be made to know that although he had captured one Peshwa, another had taken his place and that the King's government goes on uninterrupted. Shahu, impressed by this irrefutable argument, immediately ordered preparations for the necessary ceremonies to be made and on November 17, 1713, made Balaji Vishwanath his Peshwa. This marks the beginning of the transfer of power from the Chhatrapati to the Peshwa. In due course, other high posts were also given to the nominees of the new Peshwa.

Balaji, with the halo of Peshwaship now round him, backed by his own personal talents, was able to win over Kanhoji Angre to Shahu's loyalty.

The Peshwa performed a singular service for his King. This was the release from confinement at Delhi of Yesu Bai, the mother of King Shahu and his wife and brother. As we have read, these persons had, at the time of Shahu's release from the Mughal camp in May 1707, been retained as hostages for Shahu's good behaviour and were taken with him to Delhi by Azam Shah, the second son of Aurangzeb, who on his father's death was returning to Delhi with the whole Mughal camp. Since then, Shahu had been unsuccessfully trying to secure the release of these captives, but things had made little progress. An opportunity to secure this object arose when, during the time of Emperor Farrukhsiyar, Syed Husain Ali was appointed to the Emperor's government of the Deccan. This Husain Ali was one of the two famous Syed brothers (the other being Syed Abdullah) who are known in Mughal history as kingmakers. After some struggle, Husain Ali was able to enlist Maratha support in favour of the Delhi throne and certain terms and conditions were drawn up and approved by

Husain Ali subject to ratification by the Emperor. These conditions related to the autonomy of Shivaji's dominions now in the hands of Shahu, the right to collect chauth and sardeshmukhi by the Marathas in the six Mughal subas of the south, the payment of an annual tribute of ten lakhs to the Emperor and, most important of all, the release of Shahu's mother, wife, brother and others detained at the Delhi court.

Husain Ali had promised that he would, in due course, get the Emperor's ratification to these terms and the issue of sanads over the Imperial seal. This was in 1718. But before the treaty could be taken to Delhi, the Emperor, who had been informed of its terms, signified his disapproval. Things came to a head at the Delhi court where Syed Abdullah, finding his position threatened, asked his brother, Husain Ali, to return to the capital at once. Husain Ali thereupon asked Shahu to send with him a Maratha expedition to Delhi—this was agreed to and Peshwa Balaji headed the party. Reaching Delhi in February 1719 Husain Ali found things in confusion. There was alarm amongst the population of Delhi due to the presence of troops belonging to Rajput rulers and Muslim grandees. Eventually, there was a Palace revolution resulting in the deposition of Farrukhsiyar* and the placing on the throne of two Shahzadas in quick succession by the Syed brothers. In this revolution the Syed brothers received the help of the Maratha troops who had accompanied the expedition. The revolution over, the Syed brothers prepared formal sanads in favour of Shahu and after their ratification under the Imperial seal handed them to Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath. To him were also delivered Shahu's mother and the rest of the party who had been confined at Delhi for nearly twelve years now. This was in March 1719.

On March 20, 1719, Balaji left Delhi, reaching Satara in July. He was accorded a grand welcome by Shahu who was greatly pleased by the success of the expedition and was overjoyed at meeting his mother and wife after twelve years of separation. At a big darbar Shahu eulogised the services of his Peshwa

During his stay at Delhi for a month Balaji received from the Syed brothers the expenses of his troops and a large number of presents of dresses and other valuable articles. It is stated that Balaji paid a sum of Rs.30 lakhs into Shahu's treasury, being the saving of the amounts he had received from the Syed brothers.

Balaji Vishwanath did not live long afterwards to enjoy the prestige and reputation which he had gained among the Marathas by his devotion, talents and perseverance. He died a sudden death on April 2, 1720, at an age estimated to be in the neighbourhood of sixty.

As founder of the Peshwa dynasty, Balaji Vishwanath had qualities of his own. He was an entirely self-taught man with no claims to high ancestry in statesmanship. In his frequent contacts with the Mughals during the Deccan campaigns of Aurangzeb he had learned a good deal about Mughal diplomacy and etiquette. He rose to be a statesman of a high order with a "calm, comprehensive and commanding intellect, an imaginative and aspiring disposition, an aptitude for ruling rude nature by moral force, a genius for diplomatic combination, a mastery of finance."†

His success as an organiser and statesman was due in no small measure to his devoted wife, Radhabai, a shrewd lady who, during her widowhood of 33 years, came to be universally revered. She had a great influence

*He was put to death two months after his arrest and deposition.

†Sir Richard Temple quoted by Sardesai in Volume II, page 61.

during the time of the Peshwaship of her son Baji Rao I and grandson Balaji Baji Rao.

His further asset was his charming personality with handsome features and a very fair complexion, a trait which was inherited from him by the later Peshwas.

His achievement principally lay in restoring peace and plenty to the Maratha territory. He was able to achieve this by his ardent desire for the prosperity of the common man and to secure its fulfilment he did not spare any of his powers of head and heart. He was looked upon as a great benefactor.

D.—BAJI RAO I

SECOND PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1700.	1740.	1720 *till death.*

On his death, the Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath had left two sons, the elder Baji Rao, aged 19, and the younger, Chimnaji Appa. Baji Rao had been associated with his father in his expedition to Delhi and in other undertakings and shown an adventurous spirit and youthful vigour. Shahu had been impressed by these qualities and appointed him his Peshwa in preference to many a veteran of merit and experience. He silenced opposition to his choice by tactful means and invested Baji Rao with the robes of Peshwaship on April 17, 1720, a fortnight after his father's death. In a special durbar he announced that if Baji Rao did not prove his worth a fresh appointment would be made adding that in view of his gratitude to the late Peshwa he had no alternative but to give a trial to the deceased Minister's son.

Baji Rao, on his part, was full of promise. He had all the assets needed for the office. His robust and hardy constitution added impression to his handsome features and a very fair complexion which, coupled with courteous manners and smart and intelligent appearance, left nothing to be desired in the make-up of this extraordinary personality. Men and women thronged to watch him as a fairy personality whenever he had occasion to pass riding through the cities of Aurangabad, Burhanpur, Ujjain and Jaipur.

Added to these, he also excelled in the qualities of valour, statesmanship, learning and accounts. No wonder then that by the time he was thirty his name had become renowned throughout India.

On entering his office, Baji Rao chose for his assistance officers of his own age avoiding at the same time the susceptibilities of elder courtiers of King Shahu. His most sincere collaborator was his own younger brother, Chimnaji Appa. Amongst themselves they spared no pains to satisfy their King and to further his interests in the fashion he desired. The two brothers were most deeply attached to each other and there never occurred any clash of ideas between them. Later, Baji Rao's son, Balaji *alias* Nana Saheb, when he grew up, assisted in the court work at Satara relieving Chimnaji for outside work.

The rescue of Chhatrasal, the famous Bundela chief, is one of the highlights of Baji Rao's military skill. Chhatrasal had established his capital at Panna. The Bundelas were against the Mughals since the days of Aurangzeb. Mohammad Khan Bangesh, who later founded the house of the Nawabs of Farrukhabad, was the Mughal Subedar of Allahabad. There were disputes between him and Chhatrasal resulting in frequent conflicts. In one of them Chhatrasal

was greatly hard-pressed and would have been annihilated but for Baji Rao coming to his aid at the critical time. Chhatrasal had sent a message to Baji Rao who was then at Devgad. This message has been immortalised in a Hindi couplet which reads :

जो गति ग्राह गजेन्द्र की, सो गति जानहुं आज ;
बाजी जात बुंदेल की, राखो बाजी लाज ।*

With a force of 25,000 horse-men Baji Rao hastened to Chhatrasal's succour. He inflicted a crushing blow on the Bangesh who had a force of 20,000 well-equipped troops at his own command and to whose assistance his son was heading with an army of 30,000. Baji Rao prevented a meeting between the troops of the father and the son and inflicted a severe defeat on the son. A large amount of booty fell into the hands of Baji Rao. Mohammad Khan himself was under siege and, with no hope to save himself, surrendered. He gave an undertaking never to return to Bundelkhand or embarrass Chhatrasal in any way.

Chhatrasal showed deep gratitude to Baji Rao and honoured him in a darbar. He also assigned a large jagir in Bundelkhand to Baji Rao. A dancing girl, Mastani, was, it is said, presented by Chhatrasal to Baji Rao in accordance with the traditional usage. A reference to this lady, who was considered the foremost beauty of her time, has been made later in this chapter.

During the year 1733--35 Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur had conducted offensive operations on behalf of the Emperor against the Marathas. He was aided by several Mughal chiefs, but the result was inconclusive. The Maharaja was a shrewd person and, having observed things from close quarters, had come to the conclusion that it was futile to try to subdue the Marathas by force of arms. He, therefore, advocated direct negotiations with the Peshwa himself by the Emperor and with the latter's permission invited Baji Rao to Delhi. Baji Rao reached Udaipur in February 1735 having left Poona in the preceding Diwali. During the journey through Rajputana Baji Rao was welcomed with extraordinary joy and respect. From all quarters presents and tributes were offered to him. At Udaipur itself he was honoured by the Maharana in a grand open durbar.

The Maharana had made the seating arrangement at the durbar in such a way that both the guest and the host would take their seats side by side. Baji Rao, thereupon, in conformity with the magnanimity of his heart, declined to accept the position of equality with the descendant of the godly Maharana Pratap and preferred to occupy a seat at a lower level.

All necessary preliminaries for Baji Rao's visit to the Emperor had been completed and the tentative terms of a treaty of peace and good-will were drawn up. But at the nick of time the Emperor changed his mind and the projected meeting did not materialise.

Some idea of the great influence which Baji Rao exercised throughout India can be had from the loving welcome which his mother, Radha Bai, received from all quarters during her pilgrimage of Northern India from February 1735 to June 1736. Conditions were disturbed and fears were entertained about the peaceful conclusion of the pilgrimage. However, as soon as it became known that Radha Bai was setting out on her pilgrimage, invitations poured into Poona from Rajput princes and Mughal officials in North India requesting Baji Rao to send the lady to visit the shrines in their estates. With these favourable auspices she started with a large following, her son-in-law, Abaji Naik, being in-charge of the arrangements. The Emperor

*The plight in which the Elephant was placed in the fight with the Crocodile, the same is my plight today. The Bundela Chief is at the point of losing the wager, save his honour, O! Baji Rao.

himself provided a thousand troops of his personal body-guard to accompany the party during the period of their stay beyond the Narmada. Mohammad Khan Bangesh, whom Baji Rao had defeated a few years back in Bundelkhand, also magnanimously came forward to welcome the lady when she passed through his jurisdiction. He sent his Dewan to meet her at the Yamuna, and her party, on crossing the river, received an affectionate welcome from the Bangesh. He was moved by the letter which Baji Rao had addressed to him about the care of his mother. He treated the revered lady with the respect and affection due to a mother, and said so. His officials throughout his territory had orders to give due reception to the party everywhere.

Of the places visited by the lady mention may be made of Nathdwara, Mathura, Vrindaban, Kurukshetra, Prayag, Varanasi, Gaya, Saugor and Jaipur. She stayed at the last-named place for as long as three months at the special request of the ruler, Sawai Jai Singh, who insisted that she should stay in his capital till the Dasehra which was an event of special celebration there. Maharaja Jai Singh had deputed an officer with a strong guard to escort her throughout the journey. The Maharaja is said to have acted "exactly like a son to the lady, escorting her with a strong guard and personally entertaining her within his own capital and supplying all her needs and comforts in minutest detail".* She also received a fitting welcome from the Rana of Udaipur who had specially sent an agent to Poona for the purpose in advance.

This successful conclusion of the pilgrimage without any incident during a period of unrest is in itself a tribute to the personality of the Peshwa Baji Rao and points to the great awe in which his name was held in North India.

In the life of this great man was introduced some time in 1730 a lady of rare beauty and refinement, by name Mastani. She was presented to him as a mark of reverence and gratefulness by Chhatrasal, the King of Bundelkhand, when Baji Rao had saved him from destruction at the hands of Mohammad Khan Bangesh. Mastani was a dancing girl skilled in riding and handling the sword. In addition, she excelled in dance and music. She is said to have been the offspring of a Hindu father and a Muslim mother.

Baji Rao was greatly attached to Mastani and provided her with separate apartments in the palace with the other ladies of his household. One of the gates in the boundary of the palace through which she used to pass was named after her. He treated her as a regular member of his household. At the annual Ganpati celebrations at the palace she used to come out and give public performance in music and dance.

Baji Rao constantly craved her company and derived inspiration from her in the crowded events of his life. She accompanied him in most of his military campaigns and rode side by side with him. She on her part was also wholly devoted to Baji Rao, dressing and living in Hindu fashion and looking after Baji Rao's comforts in minute details. A son, named Shamsher Bahadur, was born to her in 1734 and who later became the Nawab of Banda.

But the presence of Mastani wrecked the domestic life of Baji Rao. The Peshwa belonged to an orthodox Brahman family and the presence of a Muslim lady in Baji Rao's household was inwardly resented by one and all. Baji Rao had issues from his regular wife and the show of special favours to a Muslim mistress could not naturally be liked by the members of his household. Matters came to a head when occasion arose for the performance of the sacred-thread ceremony of the Peshwa's son and the marriage of his

*Hingne Daftar, Part I, page 19.

nephew. The family priests showed disinclination to take part in the ceremonies if Mastani was present. In the meanwhile, however, Baji Rao had to leave Poona in 1739 for a military campaign and during his absence Mastani was suddenly seized and kept in confinement. When the news reached Baji Rao his heart was broken. For one thing, he did not think it proper to return to Poona and free her by force as that would have completely outraged the Maharashtra society and public opinion against him which Baji Rao could not dare to face. On the other hand, the thought that he was powerless to help Mastani in her troubles caused him unbearable agony. In this condition he was suddenly seized with high fever, the first and the last ailment of his life. He died within two days at Raver on the south bank of Narbada on April 28, 1740, at the age of 40.

Mastani, it is said, ended her life in the palace of Poona immediately on hearing of Baji Rao's death. Doubts have been expressed whether she died by suicide or by shock, but the fact remains that, as in her devotion in life to the Peshwa, she died in the spirit of a *sati* when her protector was no more.

The twenty years of his Peshwaship were full of activity and he knew not a moment of rest. He made tireless journeys across the country from Seringapatam to Delhi, from Ahmedabad to Hyderabad in military campaigns and diplomatic moves. He brought about a revolution in the character of the Maratha State and along with it a re-alignment of political power in the country. The centre of gravity was now at the court of Satara and not at Delhi.

In his military achievements he was next only to Shivaji. He succeeded in twenty years to spread the Maratha net-work in all directions, including the war on the Portuguese and the capture of the port of Bassein from them in a campaign for over two years. The Portuguese power was practically destroyed having been reduced to the possession of the small spots of Goa, Daman and Diu.

As a great general and unsurpassed rider, Baji Rao introduced technique in the art of warfare which stood in good stead to the Maratha nation. Sir Richard Temple has paid him a high tribute in words which are quoted: "He died, as he lived, in camp under canvas among his men and he is remembered among the Marathas as a fighting Peshwa, as the incarnation of Hindu energy".*

E—BALAJI BAJI RAO

THIRD PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1721.	1761.	1740 *till death.*

Baji Rao was succeeded by his eldest son who became the third Peshwa under the name of Balaji Baji Rao, popularly called Nana Saheb. (He is different from the Nana Saheb of 1857). He left Poona for Satara to receive the robes of Peshwaship from King Shahu and was invested on June 25, 1740. He was then 18½ years old, i.e. about a year younger than his father when he had taken over that post.

On becoming Peshwa, Balaji Rao received from Maharaja Shahu the revenues of thirty villages to cover his emoluments. He also

*Oriental Experience, page 390.

received his "instrument of instructions" in these words : "Baji Rao served the State loyally on the lines laid down by his father and expanded the Maratha dominions by many a heroic deed. When Nadir Shah devastated Delhi, Baji Rao was despatched to restore the Emperor to his seat, but was cut off by fate in the midst of his life. You are his son and must carry to completion his half-finished work by extending the Maratha prestige to the frontier of Attock".

Though young in years, Balaji Rao had gained some experience of state affairs during the time of his father. He had also learnt a good deal from his uncle, the good Chimnaji Appa, who had moulded his personality, and with whom he had been associated in administrative work and diplomacy. He had none of the dashing temperament of his father, nor his qualities of military leadership. But he had a natural gift of tact, a commanding appearance, a sweet temper, all of which together helped him in achieving success. He had already been married in 1730 to Gopika Bai, then aged seven.

His Prime Ministership lasted for 21 years. The first nine years ending with the death of Maharaja Shahu in 1749 marked the first phase of his career, the next twelve years forming the second phase when he acted as the practical head of the Maratha Government.

During his regime Balaji Rao led four expeditions, the first to Dholpur (1740-41), the second to Bengal (1741-43), the third to Bhilsa (1744-45) and the last to Newai (1747-48), all in northern India. Thereafter, he did not personally lead any expedition leaving the task to his military chiefs.

Apart from State affairs, the Peshwa Balaji Rao had also to take care of the intrigues that were going on amongst Shahu's two quarrelsome queens who were in the habit of interfering with the administration and causing worry to their husband. Until 1740, a certain lady had been carrying on the affairs of the palace with great capability, looking after the personal comfort of the King and exercising an affectionate control over the intemperate queens. A void was created by her death at the end of 1740 when the royal household fell into utter confusion. Shahu began to feel helpless and did not allow the Peshwa to leave his side in his ill-health as he feared that some sudden tragedy might overtake him. The queens were constantly demanding large sums of money and always causing other troubles.

In this condition the saintly Shahu felt very miserable, declined to take medicine and neglected his health. He was deprived of the relish of life and often cried out in grief : "These two ladies will starve me to death". Such was the difficult situation with which the Peshwa was faced and it goes to his credit that he handled things with tact and foresight. He satisfied the two queens by conceding their demands to the utmost. But many external matters needed the Peshwa's presence elsewhere and in the interest of the State he wanted to leave Satara. Shahu, however, was worried about the debts he owed to bankers who were harassing him. As a devout Hindu it was his keen desire to clear his liabilities before his death which he saw approaching. He felt that if he died in debt he would be doomed in the next life. The Peshwa wanted a few months to arrange for funds, but in the meanwhile his opponents so poisoned the ears of Shahu that in a moment of disgust and wholly against his will he yielded to opposition and sent a message to the Peshwa that he had been deprived of his office, that he need not henceforth wait upon His Highness. This was in February 1747.

The faithful Peshwa accepted this verbal order with perfect calm. He did not for a moment think of rebelling against his master, as another person in his place might have done according to the standards of behaviour prevailing at the time. He sent



BAJI RAO I

SECOND PESHWA

Remembered as the fighting Peshwa, Baji Rao introduced technique in the art of warfare and extended the Maratha supremacy in all directions, including the liquidation of the Portuguese power.



BALAJI BAJI RAO

THIRD PESHWA

In a moment of imbalance, King Shahu deposed Balaji of his office. The faithful Peshwa accepted the verbal order with perfect calm and returned the insignia of his office to the Palace. After two months, Shahu on becoming convinced of the Peshwa's sincerity, called him back. For this purpose he personally went to the tent which the Peshwa had quietly pitched near Satara, expecting to receive a call from his own master.



MADHAV RAO I

FOURTH PESHWA

By courtesy of Chitrashala Press, Poona

[illegible] compensation to the ryots for the loss caused by the march of [illegible] the [illegible] to make personal enquiries into the grievances of his subjects [illegible]. As a remarkable administrator and fearless general [illegible] the Maratha prestige had suffered on the disaster [illegible] youth, yet [illegible] Madhav Rao has left behind the [illegible] that the Indian nationality has produced.



NARAIN RAO
FIFTH PESHWA

(By courtesy of Chitrashala Press, Poona.)

His assassination, after he had been on the gaddi only for a few months, is a dark chapter in the history of the Peshwas. His mother went mad with grief. Her first son was killed in the battle of Panipat, the second died as the ruling Peshwa at 28, and he, the last, was slain by hired assassins. For a whole year she went about begging from door to door.



RAGHUNATH RAO
SIXTH PESHWA

[illegible] Raghunath [illegible]

MADHAV RAO II

SEVENTH PESHWA

[By courtesy of Chitrashala Press, Poona]

Becoming Peshwa from the very day of his birth, he was brought up as the saviour of the Maratha empire. But before he was 21 he jumped to his death from the palace balcony in a state of delirium or, as another version has it, of acute disgust.





BAJI RAO II

THE LAST PESHWA

The second Baji Rao was a man of parts and perseverance, but his friends and advisers, who were low-rate men brought about his ruin. Passing the empire of the Peshwas to the British in 1818 he lived in exile at Bithoor as a pensioner of the East India Company, dying a few years before the 'Mutiny' and leaving **NANA SAHEB** *as his adopted son and successor.*

back to the Court all the insignia of his office. The news of this instantly spread about and confusion arose all round. His Highness wanted to put another person in Balaji Rao's place and even made some preliminary arrangements, but these failed to materialise. After two months the ailing sovereign, convinced of the sincere loyalty of the Peshwa, re-invested him. For this purpose he personally went to the tent which the Peshwa had quietly pitched near Satara expecting to receive a call from his master.

Shahu's time was now approaching. He was losing strength day by day, but until the end his mental capacity was unimpaired. Two months before his death he issued two farmans to the Peshwa. In the first he referred to the question of a successor adding "whoever becomes the Chhatrapati will not interfere with your management". In the second he wrote : "Balaji Pandit Pradhan is commanded. We feel confident you will carry out the responsibility of the Raj. You have my blessing and my palm is laid on your head. Whoever comes as Chhatrapati will continue you in the office of the minister. If he does not, my curse be on him. Do preserve the State."

The dying monarch had always felt embarrassed about his successor. A son born to him long ago had died in infancy. Several daughters born thereafter were alive. There were various suggestions about a successor, but ultimately, and against the advice of the Peshwa, he nominated Ram Raja to succeed him.

Shahu died on December 15, 1749 and one of his queens, Sakwar Bai became *Sati*.

Shahu was a person belonging to a special category of his own. He lived a simple and frugal life free from personal blemishes of every kind. He wore plain white garments in private life as well as when appearing in public. He always carried a bare head even during hunt, regardless of sun or rain. His retinue was always small. But though living an ascetic's life himself, he always rejoiced in making others happy, without regard to race, religion or sect. He was equally broad-hearted in his religious outlook.* He was highly benevolent in his disposition so much so that he even let go unpunished persons who made attempts on his own life. It was said of him that he rightly deserved the title of *ajata-shatru* (enemyless).

He made little distinction between the rich and the poor amongst his subjects. Even the poor invited him on their marriage celebrations and he never hesitated to join them and help them in need. He strove to advance the interests of his subjects. He has been styled *punyashloke* (of pious memory) by several contemporary writers.

His constant care was bestowed towards the security, dignity and honour of the Maratha State. After breakfast he busied himself with office work which was considerable. But he was patient in passing orders after careful study and patient hearing of the petitions submitted. This took him until the evening when at light-time a full court was held. He enjoyed sound health during his long reign of 40 years, except during the last three years of his life, and this enabled him to devote so much care and attention to matters of State.

Above all he had a kind heart which enabled him to win opponents to his side. In his humility he adopted a generous and selfless

*It is on record that he made no distinction between Muslim and Hindu saints, conferring inams and gifts on them without distinction. Christians also benefited by his patronage. After the fall of Bassein he ordered that the utmost care be taken of churches and Christian priests--Sardesai, Vol. II, page 282.
Again, Begum Zinat-un-Nisa who had treated him as a son during his captivity in Aurangzeb's camp had sent Shahu a gold palm of the Emperor and it is said that in his devotion to that lady, whom he always respected as his own mother, he worshipped it faithfully during his life.

policy and had the following noble motto engraved on his official seal :

वर्धिष्णु विक्रमो विष्णो : सा मूर्तिरिव वामनी :
शंभुसूनोरसौ मुद्रा शिवराजस्य राजते । *

Though not endowed with any special qualities of the mind Shahu was a rare judge of men and never failed to pick up the right person for the job. He also trusted those whom he appointed and so it came to be that the Peshwas under him became the real administrators and trustees of his dominions.

As we have already seen, Shahu had nominated Ram Raja to succeed him as Chhatrapati. Ram Raja had been declared by Tara Bai to be the posthumous child of her son, Shivaji II. She had given out the story that his birth and subsequent life were kept secret for fear of foul play against the boy's life. If the above story was true, he was the nearest heir in the great Shivaji's family to succeed the dead Shahu. So he was brought from obscurity and placed on the throne in January 1750.

Tara Bai, now 75 years of age, began to conduct State affairs in the name of Ram Raja. Soon, however, quarrels arose between the two and Tara Bai succeeded in keeping the new Chhatrapati in confinement at the fort of Satara. Contrary to her earlier story she now gave out that Ram Raja was not really her grandson ; that he was an impostor. This created a social crisis of the first order. The two fathers-in-law of Ram Raja who had married their daughters to him on his becoming the Chhatrapati and thus believing in his high birth, began to curse their lot at the shameful insinuation that he belonged to some low family. The Peshwa could see no way to resolve these social issues and left Satara for Poona.

Thinking over the matter at Poona, the Peshwa summoned influential people for discussion and invited to it the Chhatrapati himself and Tara Bai. After long discussions, a settlement was at last reached and was endorsed by the Chhatrapati. According to this arrangement, the supreme power which, in the last years of Shahu, had come in a *de facto* manner to the Peshwa, was now formally transferred to him. Ram Raja himself, with no more than ordinary brains, contented himself by becoming a mere figurehead in his exalted position. The seat of Government was also at the same time transferred from Satara to Poona. This silent revolution which made the Peshwa and his successors the *de facto* and *de jure* rulers of Maharashtra was peacefully and silently effected in August 1750 through the skill, patience and perseverance of Balaji Rao.

It must, at the same time, be added in fairness to the Peshwa Balaji Rao that earlier he had done everything possible to sustain the new Chhatrapati's power and to make him an effective ruler, but Ram Raja was without nerve, without initiative and of a wavering mind. To this were added the complications arising from his grandmother's greed for power and her consequential intrigues.

The battle of Panipat was the most important as well as the most tragic event of the regime of Peshwa Balaji Rao. A bitter struggle had arisen, after the death of Maharaja Shahu, between Ahmad Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan, and the Marathas and between them, they contested for supremacy at the Court of Delhi. The struggle, which was long-drawn, culminated in the disastrous defeat of the Marathas at the third battle of Panipat in January 1761.

Ahmad Shah Abdali (born in 1724) succeeded Iran's Nadir Shah after the latter had been assassinated in 1747. He was a lieutenant of Nadir Shah whose service he had entered at the early age of 13 and had been with him in his expedition to Delhi in

*An insignificant person like me is no more than a part of the all-pervading divine power.

1739. On usurping the kingdom of Nadir Shah, he organized his affairs and secured his position, establishing himself at Kabul. He was an able and adventurous general greedy for conquest. But his desire for conquest had but a limited scope. He never had a design on the crown of Delhi or to extend his immediate dominions beyond the limits of Afghanistan, his home country. He intended to have, under his control, only the Punjab which adjoined his kingdom and from which he expected a regular and substantial revenue for the upkeep of his troops which were too great a liability on the slender resources of his own poor country. But in order to hold the Punjab, it was necessary for him to have control over the Court of Delhi. The treasures of Delhi and other adjoining places of India also lured him to plunder. In fulfilment of these objects, he led several invasions into the Punjab and in one of them plundered Delhi and Mathura.

The Marathas, who had obtained the control of the Punjab and who had also established influence at the Court of Delhi, were un-nerved by the campaigns of the Shah and rightly felt that their southern dominions would not always be safe with a strong and independent central authority at Delhi. They too were, therefore, anxious to continue their control of Delhi. This was the bone of contention between the two.

So the Marathas made elaborate preparations to meet the future attacks of the Shah. But the Shah, who had the Pathans of Afghanistan as his subjects, found supporters amongst the Indian Pathans who had always regarded the Mughals as usurpers of the Pathan power in India, a power which had its hold in the country prior to the defeat by Babar of Ibrahim Lodi at the first battle of Panipat.

The rise of Abdali led these Indian Pathans to entertain hopes of a Pathan revival in India. They offered help to the Shah in his Indian campaigns and invited him to come to their help.

It was in this background that Ahmad Shah left Kabul for his last and bitterest campaigns in India. The Marathas on their part made elaborate preparations to meet him. The Peshwa himself supervised the selection of commanders and equipment. Though he himself did not lead the army, he sent his eldest son, Vishwas Rao, aged 17, with Sadashiva Bhau, the Peshwa's cousin and the Commander-in-Chief of this large army, with Vishwas Rao, representing the Peshwa, as the nominal Supreme Commander.

Some encounters between the parties had taken place earlier in the Punjab and elsewhere, but the final plan was set for the field of Panipat

Due to certain strategic complications the opposing armies, pitched against each other with a distance of a few miles in between, did not come to grips for some two months. Both were in difficulties about the food-supply but the Marathas had almost begun to starve. In this critical situation, Bhau Sahib was now left with no alternative but to give fight whatever the consequences. He set out with his entire army and camp-followers in the early morning of January 14, 1761, to attack the Shah's position. After a march till nine o'clock in the forenoon, the contest began at that hour.

The fighting troops were approximately 1,00,000* on each side. On the Maratha side there were, in addition, about 1,50,000 camp-followers, non-combatants and others. The Shah too had his camp-followers.

The battle of Panipat was fought and finished in the brief space of six hours on a single day. The mopping up operations, however, continued a little longer. The actual fighting

*According to another estimate the number of combatants on both sides taken together was in the neighbourhood of one lakh only.

began at about 9 o'clock in the morning. The Marathas fought vigorously and caused havoc in Abdali's army. This grim struggle went on in favour of the Marathas for the first few hours. In the centre of the battle dreadful combat was taking place with Sadashiva Bhau and Vishwas Rao on the one hand and the Shah's Minister on the other. Before the onslaught of the former, the Shah's army was broken up. There was a regular flight amongst the latter's soldiers and the situation was about to turn completely in favour of the Marathas.

When Abdali saw this grave position, he rushed a reserve of 13,000 troops into the thick of battle. He also called back those who were fleeing on pain of cutting them down. The Marathas had by now become exhausted by strenuous fighting for over five hours, their physical strength having been previously snapped in the difficult camp life in which they had not been receiving adequate food. Further, before day-break they had marched from their camp to the field of battle several miles distant, without food and water. The Shah chose this moment for throwing in the fresh reserve in the battle.

The situation was now completely changed against the Marathas. The battle was terrific and Vishwas Rao, riding on his horse in the thick of battle, was hit by a bullet and fell fighting at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Bhau Sahib was unnerved by his nephew's death. In half an hour the Marathas lost their strength as a result of Bhau Sahib taking his dead nephew on an elephant and plunging himself in the thick of action in which he was slain. A general flight commenced and the day was lost. The major portion of the vast army with their families and camp followers was annihilated.

The pursuit of the defeated army continued during the night and until the morning. The next day a rough count of the dead was made and they numbered 28,000. In addition, countless corpses were found in the vast plain of Panipat and the jungles around. Some 35,000 Marathas had been taken prisoner and killed in cold-blood. It has been estimated that 75,000 Marathas were killed, some 22,000 saving their lives by paying ransom.* The dead bodies of Vishwas Rao and Sadashiv Bhau were recovered and were allowed to be given proper funeral. It is on record that the dead body of the remarkably handsome Vishwas Rao had lost none of its nobility—the heir apparent of a great ruler, by dying a soldier's death, had lustre added to his features.

The following are excerpts from an account of the battle which the Shah himself wrote :

"The flame of fighting blazed up and raged on all sides. The enemy too distinguished themselves and fought so well that it was beyond the capacity of other races. Gradually the fighting passed from the exchange of cannon and rocket-fire to the discharge of muskets, from which it proceeded to the stage of combat with swords, daggers and knives. They grasped each other by the neck. These dauntless blood shedders (the Marathas) did not fall short in fighting and doing glorious deeds. Suddenly, the breeze of victory began to blow and as willed by the Divine Lord, the wretched Deccanis suffered utter defeat. Vishwas Rao and the Bhau who had been fighting in front of my Wazier were slain and many other sardars also on their side fell . . . . Forty to fifty thousand troopers and infantry-men of the enemy became as grass before our pitiless swords. All the enemy's artillery, elephants and property have been seized by my men."

The Shah offered devout prayers on the next day of the battle at the shrine of a Muslim saint in the village of Panipat. He then proceeded to Delhi where he took up residence in the Royal Palace on January 29. There he held regular courts in the Dewan-e- Khas after the fashion of the Mughal emperors. But he had no peace of mind because his troops were heading to open rebellion on account of the non-receipt of pay for the eighteen months of their stay in India. Their greed for plunder also remained unsatisfied, because there was little plunder this time. The Shah made endeavours to raise funds from Emperor Shah Alam's Minister, but the latter was helpless.

*Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 443.

The only way out of the difficulty for the Shah now was to return to his country for which his troops were clamouring. So he suddenly left Delhi on March 20, reaching Afghanistan in the following May.

Ahmad Shah had never any designs of sitting on the throne of Delhi—all he wanted was a regular source of income from the Punjab, without, in anyway, interfering with the Imperial Court at Delhi or the rights of the Marathas in Northern India. It was on his failure to achieve this object that he felt obliged to fight the dreadful battle of Panipat.

It was in these circumstances that even after his victory at Panipat the Shah was anxious to secure the goodwill of the Marathas and to that end wrote a personal letter to the Peshwa stating :

"There is no reason why there should exist any ill-feeling between you and us; true you have lost your son and brother in the unfortunate fight; but it was entirely provoked by Bhau Sahib and we could not act otherwise than we did in self-defence. However, we are deeply sorry for these losses. We readily leave to you the subject of the imperial management of Delhi, provided you allow us to hold the Punjab up to the river Sutlej and support Shah Alam as the Emperor. You must forget the regrettable events that have taken place and entertain a lasting friendship towards us which we are anxiously soliciting."

As a further gesture of his goodwill the Shah sent, in accompaniment of this letter, the customary dresses which reached the Peshwa in Malwa in February 1761. But for various reasons, the final treaty of peace took some two years to materialise.

The treaty was finalised at Poona in February 1763, in the presence of the Shah's agents who had come specifically for this purpose. On behalf of the Marathas, the document was signed by Peshwa Madhav Rao I who had now succeeded his father on the latter's death in 1761. The sad memories of Panipat were finally effaced by this instrument which was sent back to the Shah at Kabul with dresses and an elephant as presents from the Peshwa.*

Peshwa Balaji Rao was completely shaken by the disaster of Panipat. He had plans to join his generals at Delhi to give a united battle to the Shah. He was at Malwa, anxiously waiting news from Panipat where the opposing forces had pitched camps for some time. He was getting anxious day by day and on January 18, wrote to Bhau Sahib advising him to hold Abdali until he himself arrived when the combined armies would easily crush the Shah. At Bhilsa, he intercepted, on January 24, a letter which a banker's agent was bringing from Panipat. The letter indicated by metaphors that something serious had happened to the Maratha army at Panipat :

"Two pearls dissolved, twenty-five gold mohurs have been lost, and of the silver and copper the total cannot be cast up."†

These were the figurative words which told their own tale.

Further details reached the Peshwa showing how previous to the actual engagement on the fateful day, the Maratha army had been starved for days for want of food and water and how on that day they clamorously rushed forth to their doom. The Peshwa's heart was literally broken. His physical frame was ruined and his mental condition was miserable. It was decided that he should now immediately return to Poona where he arrived in early June. There, his condition fast deteriorated and he also lost the balance of his mind. On June 23, 1761, he died.

Though the loss suffered in the battle by the Marathas was enormous in men and material their spirits were unbroken. The leaders of the State with the exception of the Peshwa, were left unnerved. If anything, the tragedy of Panipat infused new vigour and

*Sardesai, Vol. II, pp. 47-48.

†"Two pearls" obviously referred to Vishwas Rao and Bhau Sahib and "twenty-five" to the top commanders being killed, with no count of the troops who had perished

moral courage in them. Major Evans Bell has significantly observed : "The battle of Panipat was a triumph and a glory for the Marathas. They fought in the cause of 'India for the Indians', while the great Mohammedan princes of Delhi, of Avadh and the Deccan stood aside, intriguing and trimming. And though the Marathas were defeated, the victorious Afghans retired and never again interfered in the affairs of India."*

The great set-back which the Maratha power had received by the loss of Panipat was now left to be retrieved by the dead Peshwa's second surviving son Madhav Rao, the most capable administrator of the house of the Peshwas and whose account follows in the next section.

F—PESHWA MADHAV RAO I

THE FOURTH PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1745.	1772.	1761 *till death.*

At the time of the death of his father, Madhav Rao was but 16 years of age. After the obsequies of the dead Peshwa were over, he received the robes of office from the Chhatrapati at Satara on July 20, 1761, and began to conduct the administration under the regency of his uncle Raghunath Rao. But the latter was never well-disposed towards the new Peshwa because on the death of Balaji Rao he himself was an aspirant for that office. However, finding no support whatever he reluctantly acquiesced in the new Peshwa's claim. There was, however, a large body of able officers loyal to the Peshwa and on the top of them all he had his mother, Gopika Bai, to guide him. Dissensions soon arose between these well-wishers of the Maratha State on the one hand and Raghunath Rao as regent on the other. Raghunath Rao began to have his own way by ignoring the young Peshwa who was not a person to yield in matters of principle.

The first task which Peshwa Madhav Rao had to face was the attack by Nizam Ali of Hyderabad. With a force of 60,000 men Nizam Ali marched towards Poona with the intention of capturing the nerve centre of Maratha power. This was in November 1761. In defence, the Peshwa and his uncle arranged with difficulty to raise 70,000 troops to finance which the Peshwa and his family melted personal ornaments and utensils of gold and silver to mint money. Several actions were fought but Nizam Ali's march to Poona could be halted only when he was at a distance of one day's march from that town. Here Nizam Ali suffered desertions and was surrounded by the Maratha forces in such a manner that retreat became impossible. He then begged for terms of peace. Raghunath Rao, from purely selfish motives, accepted Nizam Ali's light offer of territory worth rupees forty lakhs. The extraordinary concession shown by Raghunath Rao to Nizam Ali was severely criticised by prominent Maratha officers and sardars who accused Raghunath Rao of having reached a secret understanding with Nizam Ali with a view to securing the Peshwaship for himself at some opportune date in the future.

Soon after, the young Peshwa was involved in a civil war with his uncle. Earlier, he had sought on bended knees the help and co-operation of his uncle, but in his ambition

*Sardesai, Vol. II, p. 175

for power Raghunath Rao was adamant. He put forward the demand that a separate jagir of rupees ten lakhs a year be granted to him in addition to five important forts. This could not be accepted and at one time the young Peshwa began to think of putting his uncle in confinement. On becoming aware of this Raghunath Rao left Poona in August 1762. He thereafter gathered a considerable following and collected a force of 50,000. The Peshwa decided to meet the challenge in the open field. He headed his troops to meet his uncle's force and at a distance of 30 miles from Poona a severe battle was fought on November 7, 1762, but without any decisive result. On November 12, the Peshwa's army was surrounded by his uncle. The Peshwa thereupon decided to surrender and fearlessly rode into his uncle's camp for the purpose. He completely humbled himself before his uncle and placed on his own head the shoes of his uncle. Thus peace was concluded between the Peshwa and his uncle, the latter declaring that he was not after power or state.

There was then the contest with Nizam Ali which continued until 1763 when he was finally defeated and surrendered territory worth Rs.82 lakhs by the treaty of Aurangabad concluded in September 1763. From the time of Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk the rulers of Hyderabad had been intent on breaking the Maratha power, but had failed. So also failed Nizam Ali. The Marathas, though occupied in internal troubles, proved their superiority. The defeat of Nizam Ali was principally due to the Peshwa's own capabilities which were exhibited throughout the campaign. In the final battle the Nizam had been completely humbled with a loss of 12,000 troops and material in considerable quantities. This victory established the young Peshwa's reputation both as a military general and as a sound administrator. His people applauded him and he won a place amongst the hearts of all. The disaster of Panipat had been a severe blow to Maratha prestige, but this victory over the Nizam retrieved the position and throughout India the people's faith in Maratha power was restored. The national revival was now fully on its way. The Peshwa was now entirely his own master as the regency of Raghunath Rao had been completely finished.

The Peshwa had also to lead an expedition to Carnatic to put down Hyder Ali of Mysore who had occupied some Maratha territories and was threatening some others. In this campaign Hyder Ali was defeated and a treaty was concluded in March 1765.

The Peshwa now diverted his attention to the revival of the Maratha power in the north. After Panipat, the Maratha dominion in the north consisting of Delhi, Agra, the Doab, Bundelkhand and Malwa became greatly disturbed. The Rajputs, with Maharaja Madho Singh of Jaipur at their head, were the powerful opponents of the Marathas. But they were severely defeated by Malhar Rao Holkar in November 1761 and this restored Maratha prestige in the north to a considerable extent. But the British were able to acquire ascendency in Bengal and Bihar where the Emperor Shah Alam, the Nawab Wazir of Avadh and the Nawab of Bengal were quickly put down during the three years following Panipat. The Emperor was now living at Allahabad in the territories of the Nawab of Avadh and the British collected the revenues of Bengal and Bihar on behalf of the Nawab. Subsequently, Shah Alam came in the protection of the British after the battle of Baxar fought in October 1764. Soon after, Clive obtained from Shah Alam the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, that is to say the power of collecting revenue and disposing it off without any intermediary.

It was under this state of affairs that Peshwa Madhav Rao sent an expedition to take possession of Delhi. It consisted of 50,000 troops led by the able generals, including Mahadji Scindhia.

The expedition had started in 1769 and in February 1771 the Marathas were able to capture Delhi. Mahadji Scindhia placed Prince Jawan Bakht (Emperor Shah Alam's son, the Emperor being at Allahabad) on the throne. Shah Alam who was never happy at Allahabad under the protection of the British and was keen to be restored to Delhi now started for Delhi entering the capital in January 1772. In this way the Emperor was detached from alliance with the British who, in spite of the Emperor's pressure, had not been able to restore him to Delhi. With the restoration of Shah Alam to his hereditary throne under the protection of the Marathas, the disgrace of Panipat was now wiped off and Peshwa Madhav Rao rightly felt comforted in having been able to achieve this object.

Meanwhile, Raghunath Rao, who could not yet reconcile himself to the rising greatness of his nephew, continued to give trouble. The Peshwa found that his authority was being undermined by some of his sardars disobeying his orders and seeking the protection of his uncle who had considerable influence amongst the Maratha sardars and who was also in the possession of several forts. So far the Peshwa had been showing great forbearance in his dealings with his uncle whom he tried to keep contented to the farthest possible extent. He now determined to have the matter settled once and for all and demanded complete surrender by personal negotiation or a decision by arms. Eventually, he marched on Raghunath Rao who, in his turn, had collected a considerable force, but could not withstand the attack. Having no alternative he surrendered to the Peshwa. He was brought to Poona as a prisoner and kept closely confined in the palace. This was in June 1768 after an intermittent contest of seven years commencing from June 1761. In his confinement he was given all personal comforts and facilities. He maintained a large establishment of pandits, musicians and retainers.

It has been suggested by historians that the rapid decline of the Maratha State after the death of Madhav Rao in 1772 was primarily the result of intrigues of Raghunath Rao during the Peshwaship of Madhav Rao and subsequently after his death. The Peshwa Madhav Rao himself was greatly handicapped in his projects by the domestic feuds which Raghunath Rao had created during the seven years preceding his confinement.

The Peshwa was now struck with an incurable disease which caused him great physical pain. He bore his troubles patiently with his inborn courage and did not desist from his hard attention to public matters. But towards the end of 1770 he broke down while proceeding on a campaign to the Carnatic. He returned to Poona and subjected himself to intensive treatment of various kinds. His trouble was tuberculosis of the intestines for which there was in those days no known means of treatment. The disease at times caused acute pain in the stomach of the patient. To the regular treatment was added the performance of religious rites to invoke the favour of the gods. Large charities were also given and for this purpose the Peshwa was twice weighed against gold and the precious metal was assigned to the poor. A European physician, probably from Goa, also tried his remedies but in vain.

Some two months prior to his approaching end, the Peshwa executed a sort of will in September 1772. It provided for the due payment of all his debts and contained certain directions for the future administration of the State. He expressed an ardent desire that the holy places of Prayag and Varanasi should be released from Muslim control in fulfilment of the wishes of his ancestors. It also contained directions for the performance of his funeral rites at which he desired two lakhs of Brahmans to be fed and granted *dakshina*.

The awareness of the approaching end did not disturb the composure of mind of this

extraordinary prince who was going to die at the early age of 28. As days went by, his pain increased to such an extent that he asked his attendants to finish his life. He lost all appetite for food, but forced himself to take something to prevent others about him going empty stomach.

Mention may be made of an incident which raises the character of the Peshwa to a very high pitch. Having lost hope of recovery he began to destroy a stock of secret papers he had about him. One of his Ministers humbly questioned the propriety of this action, whereupon the Peshwa asked him to take out a certain bundle from a chest near-by, to read its contents and say whether it should be preserved or destroyed. The Minister's surprise knew no bounds when he found that the papers related to his own intrigues. The Peshwa had never given him any occasion even to suspect that he was holding proofs against the Minister's guilt.

The dying Peshwa also made arrangements for a successor. His wife, who was living, had borne him no issue. He nominated his younger brother, Narayan Rao, to succeed him. The succession was approved by all the principal officers including his uncle.

Though nearing his end in the fullness of youth, the Peshwa felt no disappointments. This was so because of the thought that, in the space of eleven years, he had fulfilled the task of his life. He called the famous Ram Shastri, his Chief Justice, to his side and spoke parting words to him. He repeated this with other members of his Court. And then the end came peacefully on November 18, 1772, in the morning.

Rama Bai, the Peshwa's wife, then 26 years of age, became *sati*. At the time of her marriage she was only about 7 years. She was handsome and healthy and was fond of visiting holy places. Pious and devoted to her husband, she never interfered with affairs outside the palace. The Peshwa himself was as much devoutedly attached to his wife as the latter like a true Hindu wife was attached to him.

She had performed austerities subjecting herself to severe physical privations in the hope of aiding the patient's recovery. During their life-time the two were a loving pair and now when the husband had gone Rama Bai had nothing in the world to look to. Her decision to follow her husband was entirely spontaneous. She walked in a procession to a distance of half a mile with mourners playing funeral music. Then, at the place where the corpse had been placed on the bank of the river, she stood calmly and cheerfully like the incarnation of a goddess and distributed all the ornaments which she had put on before starting. She blessed one and all in the mournful assemblage. Her appearance was serene and hopeful as if she was about to embark on a journey of pilgrimage.

The departing Rama Bai then mounted the funeral pyre and was consumed to ashes with the dead body of her husband. People were filled with awe and reverence. They believed her to be a goddess incarnate. The holy place of her immolation at Theur* near Poona was marked by a small memorial stone which was erected in her pious memory and which can still be seen today.

According to the traditions of those days special sanctity was attached to a lady who became *sati*. In the case of Rama Bai the sanctity was all the greater because her life had been one of self-denial and nobility. She was also the wife of a renowned ruler equally noble and respected. The place where the memorial stone stands is still a place of veneration. It is visited by people throughout the year.

The Peshwa occupied the office for eleven years of which the first two were spent under

*The village of Theur at which the Peshwa spent the last days of his illness is regarded by the Marathas as one of the most classic spots in their historic land.

the regency of his uncle who allowed him no opportunity of freedom in State work. The last two years were taken in fighting a malignant and painful disease. But in the brief space of seven years of active life, he achieved great tasks which make him an outstanding figure in Indian history.

Peshwa Madhav Rao is regarded as the greatest of all Peshwas. He was thoroughly honest and his diplomacy was always an open secret. All knew that he kept no mental reservations. He was a lover of impartial justice and the welfare of his subjects was his predominating care. His attention to the details of his administration has been greatly admired. He scrutinised the statements showing the number of his attendants and their pay. He conducted enquiries about the construction of unauthorised buildings in Poona and enquired about the arrangements made for the supply of fodder to cattle. Such small items of expenditure as Rs.1-8 for lamp-oil supplied to clerks find place in his daily accounts.

He was particularly keen about the cleanliness of his administration. To that end he used to examine minutely all cases of embezzlements. He had special agents for bringing corrupt employees to book. The officers whose duty it was to inspect military equipment often took bribes to certify that there were no deficiencies. On receiving complaints, the Peshwa used to send his own trusted men to make enquiries and the dishonest officials were brought to punishment. In this respect he was far above his contemporaries in rooting out corruption in the services.

In his love of justice and fair play he paid compensation to the ryots for the loss caused by the march of troops. He would not allow his subjects to be molested. During his tours he personally enquired into their grievances and took prompt measures to remove them. He drew up a set of clear rules about the duties of some of the more important executive officers. Although during the seven years of his active life he was troubled by the intrigues of his uncle, which took much of his time, he was able to place the State affairs on a firm footing.

The Mughal Emperor came under Maratha protection and was restored to his seat at Delhi although the British opposed the undertaking. Madhav Rao retrieved the loss of Maratha prestige which had been caused on account of the disaster of Panipat. The various elements in the Maratha Confederacy were brought to loyalty. Internal harmony such as was never witnessed before or after him was seen in the Maratha State of his period. Haider Ali of Mysore had been dealt with and so was the Nizam of Hyderabad. Little was left to be achieved for the consolidation of Maratha power. But for the failure of proper successors to this great ruler, the British could not have been able to establish themselves in India in supersession of the Maratha power.

Peshwa Madhav Rao was at once an administrator, a general and a statesman. In all these roles he excelled. He organized a special branch for the manufacture of firearms and ammunition in which the Maratha army was deficient, and personally supervised the arrangements. In warfare he often showed unexampled valour. His brief career is truly astonishing for its grand achievements at so youthful an age.

Tributes to his ability and character have also flown from foreign pens. Kincaid records that Madhav Rao triumphed singly over all domestic and foreign enemies, that his "every department was quickened by his supervision, his industry and his example". He concludes with the poignant words : "and the only fault that the harshest critic can find in this admirable ruler is that he shortened a life precious to his people by his arduous and incessant toil."*

*History of Maratha People.

Sir Richard Temple compliments him by saying that this youthful genius "is for ever to be revered as the model prince, 'the *flos regum*' and as one of the finest characters that the Hindu nationality has ever produced."*

G—NARAIN RAO

THE FIFTH PESHWA

Born.	*Murdered.*	*Peshwa.*
1755.	*August* 1773	*Decr.* 1772 *till death.*

Narain Rao succeeded his elder brother, Peshwa Madhav Rao, in 1772 when he was only 17 years of age. He had been nominated by the late Peshwa with the concurrence of the whole court and in the presence of the family deity as witness. On December 13 of the same year he received the robes of office from the Raja of Satara to whom he had proceeded with Raghunath Rao, his uncle, and Sakharam Bapu and other high officials. At first Raghunath Rao was unwilling to go except on condition of receiving an independent fief of Rs.25 lakhs annually for himself and his family. He was, however, ultimately prevailed upon to withdraw the demand which he did with good grace.

The young Peshwa now began to run the administration on the advice of Sakharam Bapu and Nana Fadnavis † to whose care the late Peshwa had commended Narain Rao. These were the tried and able members of the court and had well-served the deceased Peshwa. It is said that Madhav Rao had also beseeched Raghunath Rao to take care of his loving nephew. And it is on record that for a time in the beginning the nephew and the uncle pulled on well together.

During Narain Rao's regime there were no external difficulties facing the Maratha State. But for various reasons Narain Rao had become unpopular within his own dominions. For one thing, in his immature age he was incapable of controlling the policies of the administration. There were also the intrigues of the court arising from the fact that his uncle had some claims to the *musnad* and had some supporters and sympathisers. The treasury was also empty, his predecessor having drained it all by paying off his debts and had not been able to recoup it on account of his long illness. His Gardi sepoys‡ numbering about 5,000 were in arrears of pay and dissatisfied on that account. He had also caused annoyance to the powerful Prabhu caste by formally depriving them of the Kshatriya status which they unjustifiably claimed to possess, but interference with which had been judiciously avoided by the earlier Peshwas. But Narain Rao, probably on the unwise counsel of his minister, now forced them under severe penalties to adopt the practices prescribed for the Shudras who had no right to chant the Vedic hymns and to perform the other orthodox practices. Thus he lost all the sympathies of this influential community who in their resentment joined in the

*Sir Richard Temple, *Oriental Experience*, p. 396.

†This name is variously spelt as Nana Fadnavis, Nana Phadnavis, Nana Fadnis, Nana Phadnis.

‡The corps of these sepoys was composed mostly of Pathans, Abyssinians, Arabs, Rajputs and Purbias each drawing Rs.8 to Rs.15 as pay. They were stationed at Poona and were now employed on police duty about the city and the palace. They were mercenary soldiers with no personal attachment to the ruler--Sardesai, volume III, pages 15-16.

secret plot which ultimately culminated in his murder.

Added to these was his impatient and irritable nature. He sometimes acted rashly upon the information conveyed to him by petty and irresponsible persons. Now and then he could not restrain himself by showing open disrespect to his ministers and other elderly officials who in consequence became somewhat indifferent. His freakish nature was the cause of his having once removed, according to local tradition, the turban from the head of Nana Fadnavis with a stick. During the previous regime of Peshwa Madhav Rao, Shakharam Bapu, an old and trusted functionary of the State, was for some two years in the charge of training Narain Rao in the affairs of the administration, but the character and the performance of duties by Narain Rao had not satisfied Madhav Rao who often expressed fears about his future.

But Narain Rao's chief trouble arose from his uncle Raghunath Rao who had not been able to reconcile himself to the succession of his nephew. Raghunath Rao had not the courage to protest openly against the nomination of Narain Rao by the dying Madhav Rao, but he bore a deep grudge against Narain Rao. On account of his objectionable antecedents Raghoba, as he was popularly called, used to be kept by Madhav Rao under house arrest and in this respect Raghoba fared no better under the new regime. Before dying Madhav Rao had left written instructions that Raghoba was to continue in confinement to keep him from doing mischief. These instructions were not only carried out, but even tightened as a result of an unsuccessful attempt of Raghoba to escape, coupled with certain plots which he was found to be laying against the sovereign. Thus, he was not allowed to go out of his room and in consequence had to give up his practice of standing in the open and gazing long at the sun as part of his prayers. The necessities of life were provided to him in a small area and at the same time a drastic cut was made in his expenditure. On a later plan to effect escape becoming known to the Peshwa, Raghunath Rao was now confined in the Peshwa's own palace with restrictions about persons visiting him and the withdrawal of his own personal servants. These rigours greatly exasperated him and increased his bitterness towards his nephew although the relations between the uncle and the nephew were at first cordial. This is borne out by the fact that in February 1773, when Narain Rao had been on the *gaddi* for some three months, the marriage of Durgabai, Raghunath Rao's daughter, was celebrated with great pomp and rejoicing with Narain Rao himself taking prominent part in the arrangements.

All these factors contributed to the success of the conspiracy by which the young Peshwa was brutally done to death on August 30, 1773. It appears that the original plan was to seize the person of the Peshwa, to put him in confinement and then to enthrone Raghoba as the person next in the line of succession. But certain things happened which led the conspirators to suspect that their plan had leaked out and they took precipitate action some days in advance. Further, for the sake of their greater security, as they thought, they decided to finish their intended victim instead of effecting his seizure as originally intended. On the morning of the day of his murder Narain Rao had ridden on horseback to pay a return visit to a revered dignitary who was camping on the outskirts of Poona. During the conversation this gentleman warned the Peshwa about the rumours concerning the danger to his life. On the return journey the Peshwa told Haripant Phadke, who was accompanying him, about what he had heard from the gentleman visited and directed Phadke to take the necessary steps immediately. The latter assured the Peshwa that, after fulfilling an earlier engagement with a friend,

he would at once do the needful. Reaching the Palace the Peshwa had his meal whereafter, according to custom, he retired to his bed-room for the afternoon slumber.

In the meanwhile Tulya Pawar, the chief conspirator and a servant of Raghoba, having somehow got scent that the Peshwa had been forewarned set out to put his plan into immediate execution. About five hundred Gardis, headed by their four chiefs, instantly rushed into the palace after killing the guards at the gate and began to demand the arrears of their pay. The clerks on duty at the palace and the Peshwa's personal servants implored the insurgents not to raise a clamour advising them that their grievance would be listened to in office and that they should not disturb their master's sleep. Upon this these faithful men were at once killed. The leaders of the insurgents then rushed to the Peshwa's room upstairs with drawn swords. The ladies of the palace cried in horror at the deafening shouts of the mutineers but there was no one to help.

Narain Rao, awakened from repose, ran entirely unarmed, into the room of his aunt Parvati Bai who told him to run to his uncle to seek his protection. He then rushed to the room where Raghunath Rao was doing his worship, threw himself into his arms asking him to save his life adding that he, his uncle, could become the Peshwa if his own life was spared. Raghunath Rao begged Sumer Singh, who had pursued the Peshwa with drawn sword, not to harm his nephew. Upon this Sumer Singh replied 'I have not gone thus far to ensure my own destruction', and asked Raghunath Rao to leave the Peshwa else he, Raghunath Rao, too would be killed. Then, according to one version, Sumer Singh pulled the Peshwa away from his uncle and Tulya Pawar dragged him out violently and Sumer Singh hacked him to pieces. Along with the Peshwa also perished his faithful personal servant, Chapaji Tilekar, who fell upon his master's body to save him. He, along with some maid servants, was cruelly cut to pieces.*

Another version is that Raghunath Rao disengaged himself from his nephew and got out on the terrace. Narayan Rao attempted to follow him, but Tulya Pawar seized him by the leg and pulled him down. As Narayan Rao fell, Chapaji Tilekar came in and, though unarmed, rushed to his master Narayan Rao clasped his arms round Chapaji's neck and Sumer Singh and Tulya slew them with their swords.†

Shortly afterwards an old and trusted man on palace duty, by name Naroba Naik, came forth and began to censure Raghunath Rao for allowing so foul a deed to take place in his presence. Thereupon he too was cut down.

Thus, the mutiny which had started at about one o'clock in the afternoon completed a horrible tragedy in the brief space of half an hour in which the young and innocent Peshwa was brutally killed in his own palace and in the view of his own near and dear. With him perished, all in cold blood, ten more faithful persons. That the commander of the palace guard, Kharak Singh, instead of protecting his master, should have joined the mutineers, added to the horror of the tragedy. The departed Peshwa had been in office for less than nine months.

The Gardis, who were now in full possession of the palace and the enclosure-wall plundered the rooms and surrounded Raghunath Rao with drawn swords. Confusion prevailed in the whole town and the officers of the State did not know what to do. Eventually some officials, accompanied with influential citizens, gained admittance. It was only after the clamouring Gardis had been pacified as regards their arrears of pay

*Sardesai, volume III, page 26.

†*Poona Gazetteer*, page 407.

with the help of some bankers that about midnight the dead bodies were allowed to be removed for the performance of funeral rites. Just before this, Raghunath Rao had been proclaimed by the Gardis as the master of the State. The mangled parts of the Peshwa's body were collected and carried away by Trimbakrao Mama for cremation.

Sardesai in his monumental work‡ has expressed great surprise at the fact which has now been established by the mass of documentary evidence since accumulated, that Narayan Rao utterly neglected to take, or was incapable of taking, the most ordinary precautions for self-protection. For a ruler of his position these would have been easy. The learned author, in his sorrow, is only able to add that Narayan Rao possessed a sour temper which often turned his best friends into enemies.‡

The Peshwa's mother, Gopika Bai, who was at Nasik went mad with grief. The eldest of her three sons, Vishwas Rao, when only 17 years of age, had been killed in the battle of Panipat ; the second son, Peshwa Madhav Rao had died at the early age of 28, and now her only surviving son was no more. She renounced all comforts of life and with a bowl made of a half coconut-shell went begging from door to door. She regained her mind after over a year when the ministers of the State were able to drive away Raghunath Rao from Poona and when the late Peshwa's wife, Gangabai, gave birth to a son.

H—RAGHUNATH RAO

THE SIXTH PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1734.	1783.	*Octr.* 1773 *to Feb.* 1774.

Raghunath Rao now proclaimed himself Peshwa. He experienced some difficulty and delay in obtaining the robes of office from the Chhatrapati of Satara. When eventually he secured them on October 10, 1773, he performed his inauguration unceremoniously on October 31 at Alegaon and not in a full darbar at Poona. But he had no support of the ministers of the State nor of the influential people of Poona who strongly suspected him of directing his nephew's murder. Sakharam Bapu did not join the new administration ; he felt so severe a shock that he left the city in shame that he was unable to fulfil the pledge he had given to Madhava Rao to protect Narain Rao. Nana Fadnavis also withdrew himself and in any case Raghunath Rao had no liking for him. Unaided by old ministers, Raghunath Rao began the administration with people of his own choice who, like Raghunath Rao himself, were by no means popular. But as there was no other male member in the Peshwa's family, most people acquiesced in the new regime out of sheer necessity, though the suspicion against Raghunath Rao almost amounted to a belief. He was, by all and sundry, hated at heart.

Enquiry by Ram Shastri.

At this time a man of great learning and strong character was the head of the Maratha judiciary. Ram Shastri, in the capacity of the Chief Justice of the State, started an enquiry into the affair, little withstanding the opposition of Raghunath Rao who was now the *de facto* ruler. Ram Shastri's findings after an investigation of six weeks were—

(*a*) that Raghunath Rao was the main culprit ;

(*b*) that, in addition about fifty persons (49 males and one female servant) were

‡New History of Marathas volume III, page 23.

> also responsible for the crime. The total of 49 was made up of 13 Gardis (8 Hindus and 5 Muslims), 26 Brahmans (mostly clerks, who had acted as agents in settling the details of the plot and its final execution), 3 Prabhus who had taken a prominent part in the plot and 7 Marathas.

The finding made no mention of Raghunath Rao's wife, Anandi Bai, though the general belief was that she too was equally responsible with her husband. She was said to be an ambitious lady then in her 25th year.

In the course of the enquiry Ram Shastri came across a paper purporting to be from Raghunath Rao to Sumer Singh giving him authority to slay Narain Rao. Raghunath Rao admitted that he had given the order, but took the plea that his order was to seize Narain Rao, not to slay him. A close examination of the paper showed that the word *'dharavc'* (धरावे, seize) had been changed to *'marave'* (मरावे, kill). The general belief was that the change was made by Anandi Bai. It was also believed that their servant, Tulaji Pawar, had taken part in the murder under her orders. Anandi Bai on her part stoutly denied that she had any hand in the affair and as the paper does not now exist the question who made the change will ever remain an unsolved mystery. Sardesai has suggested* the possibility that when the Gardi chiefs undertook the venture (of seizing Narain Rao) they discovered that in the process of arrest it was quite possible that the Peshwa might come to be slain if he on his part offered armed resistance. Thereupon they represented this difficulty through the mediators and were absolved by Raghunath Rao from any responsibility for murder if the Peshwa came by his death in the course of the encounter. Hence came this change in the material word of the contract by which the perpetrators were to receive a large sum** as reward from Raghunath Rao.

The punishments.

When Raghunath Rao confessed his share in the murder, he asked Ram Shastri what atonement he could make. "The sacrifice of your life is the only atonement" boldly replied the Shastri. He refused to stay in Poona if Raghunath Rao was at the head of the affairs, left the city and spent the rest of his life in retirement in his native village near Wai†. According to Sardesai, Ram Shastri approached Raghunath Rao for the execution of the decrees he had passed, whereupon the latter urged that the murder was a private personal affair and that the Shastri had no concern with it. But the eminent judge fearlessly told him that he was himself found to be the chief culprit and as such deserved the capital punishment. But Raghunath Rao dismissed him from his position. Ram Shastri then retired to his native village. He exhibited the strength of his character again when a year afterwards (when Raghunath Rao was gone) the Government of the ministers requested him to come back to his post and he declined to accept it until they gave him a written promise on oath that they would never interfere with his duties and that they would faithfully execute whatever decrees he passed in his judicial capacity.‡

With Ram Shastri's declaration that Raghunath Rao was the chief offender, the court and the public refused to accept him as the legal head of the State. Consequently, he was deposed, but could not be captured, having fled Poona within less than three months of his tenure, remaining a fugitive

*Sardesai, volume III, page 25.

**The amount is believed to have been five lakhs of rupees. According to Sardesai, this amount was eventually paid by Raghunath Rao and in addition another sum of three lakhs in lieu of the three forts which the chief conspirators had wanted for their safe resort.—Sardesai, volume III, page 29.

†*Poona Gazetteer*, page 408.

‡Sardesai, volume III, pages 31-32.

from justice for eight long years. The Maratha Government engaged themselves in a difficult and costly war for that period with the British in order to secure the person of Raghunath Rao and to save the State from aggression by the British with whom Raghunath Rao was constantly intriguing. This war from 1774 to 1782, is known as the First Maratha War. He was ultimately secured and suitably dealt with after which he soon died.

Of the other offenders, Tulaji Pawar and Kharak Singh were ultimately secured in 1780 to be put to torturous death. Earlier in 1775, Mohammad Yusuf was captured from his concealment in the jungles and suffered the death penalty. Sumer Singh did not live to receive the punishment having died in 1774. The other offenders suffered varying periods of imprisonment. It is to be noted that Raghunath Rao shielded the principal offenders for a long time with all his power. They followed him during the wars in which he was engaged with the Maratha Durbar and faithfully served him. Later being unable to protect them further he recommended them to the shelter of the neighbouring powers. But as we have seen they were ultimately brought to Poona to take their sentences.

The credit for bringing all these criminals to justice belongs firstly to the renowned Ram Shastri who laid down an example of unparalleled judicial daring by conducting investigations against a ruler in power and pronouncing his decree of condemnation on his very face. Nana Fadnavis, the famous Poona Minister must also share the praise, for it was he who in the course of eight long years full of incessant labour and great difficulties succeeded in bringing all the offenders to book.

The end of Raghunath Rao.

Having engaged with the help of the British and other helpers, in unsuccessful fighting with Poona Government and fleeing as fugitive from place to place for eight long years, Raghunath Rao in his piteous misery and yet deeper agony reconciled himself to his fate. He had suffered reverse after reverse and was ultimately forsaken by the British though for a long time they declined to surrender his person to Poona. Frustrated in every way he finally and unequivocally surrendered himself and his family to the Poona authorities about the middle of July 1783. He renounced all claims of ruler of the Marathas and ceased to style himself as Pant Pradhan or Peshwa, acknowledging the young Peshwa Madhav Rao II in that position. He took up residence at Kopargaon where he erected large buildings. But he soon died a broken-hearted man in December, 1783, at the age of 48. His wife Anandi Bai and her son Baji Rao (later Peshwa Baji Rao II) survived him. She died in 1794 having suffered practical imprisonment throughout the remaining years of her life which was full of misery and indignity.

Shortly before his death Raghunath Rao went to Nasik to pay his respects to his sister-in-law, Gopika Bai (widow of Peshwa Balaji Bajirao and mother of the late Peshwa Narain Rao). Revered by the whole Maharashtra she was now living a pious life of solitude near Nasik. Before going into her presence Raghunath Rao performed, at her instance but after some hesitation, the rites of penance in the presence of a body of priests. He then loudly declared that he did instigate the confinement of his nephew although he never meant to have him slain.* On the conclusion of the ceremony he paid his respects to the lady and craved her blessings for his salvation which the pious lady lovingly bestowed on him. It was evidently these blessings which, after the death of Peshwa Madhav Rao Narain, enabled Raghu-

* This version was corroborated by the evidence of Mohammad Yusuf who said that "there was no plot or intention to murder the Peshwa. Their object was only to put him in confinement".

nath Rao's son, Baji Rao, becoming the Peshwa after many vicissitudes.

Of the character and doings of Raghunath Rao, Indian historians, including the eminent Major Basu and the veteran Sardesai, have, with one voice, spoken in terms of unequivocal condemnation. British writers, on the other hand, have written appreciatively about his character. There is of course no doubt that Raghunath Rao had his failings, but with them he must have possessed some virtue by which he was able to attract to his side many Maratha nobles and sardars, known for their ability and patriotism, in spite of the dishonour attached to his name on account of his proved complicity in the murder of his nephew. Sardesai has not attempted to investigate the reasons which brought a large following and adequate funds to Raghunath Rao for years togeth r even after the murder of Narain Rao. This is a matter for research by students of history. The present author has, however, been able to discover at least one quality which was a great asset of Raghunath Rao apart from his piety, outward though some may call it, and his love of religious ceremonies on a grand scale. And this quality was his extraordinary munificence and an unsatiable desire for charity-giving. This trait of his character endeared him to many, and the famous Hindi poet Padmakar has immortalized it in a verse of great rhythm and poetic beauty :

संपति सुमेर की कुबेर की जो पावै कहूं,
तुरत लुटावै विलम्ब उर धारै ना,
कहै पदमाकर सुहेम हय हाथिन के,
हलके हजारन के वितर विचारै ना।
गंज गज बकस महीप रघुनाथ राव,
याही गज धोखे कहूं तोहि देय डारै ना,
यातें गौरि गिरिजा गजानन को गोय रही,
गिरि ते गरे ते निज गोद ते उतारै ना।

I—SAWAI MADHAV RAO NARAYAN
(MADHAV RAO II)

THE SEVENTH PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1774.	1795.	*From birth till death.*

Ganga Bai, the widow of Peshwa Narayan Rao, gave birth to a posthumous son on April 18, 1774, some seven and a half months after her husband's murder. All the remaining hopes of Raghunath Rao to continue as the Peshwa were now shattered. There was great joy amongst the populace who believed that the great Peshwa Madhav Rao who had died in the fullness of youth at 28 had taken a new birth in the child to fulfil the programme of good government which his premature death had interrupted. Nana Fadnavis, who received congratulations from all quarters, showed his gratefulness to the Almighty by the distribution of presents and offerings to various shrines.

This child was now proclaimed Peshwa by the Council of Administration which had already been formed at Poona and which had formally de-recognized Raghunath Rao, declaring him as usurper some four months after Ram Shastri had pronounced the verdict on his guilt in October 1773. This Council is known as *Barbhais* (twelve comrades). The new Peshwa when only 40 days old was invested with the usual robes of office obtained from Chhatrapati, and was given the style and title of Srimant Sawai Madhav Rao Narayan, Pant Pradhan. The name was adopted from the name of his celebrated uncle, Peshwa Madhav Rao, who was supposed to have taken re-birth in him.

The Council of *Barbhais* was later dissolved and the administration was largely in the hands of Nana Fadnavis who acted as the Prime Minister.

The child Peshwa was brought up with great care and fondness. The court, the people and the personal servants were all irresistibly drawn towards him and this was but natural on account of his posthumous birth coupled with the sympathies that had been roused by the tragic end of his father at the hands of hired ruffians. The direct responsibility for the child's protection and health devolved on Nana Fadnavis, the senior minister of the realm, and he spared no pains in the faithful discharge of his duty. He allowed nothing to be done in respect of the child without his own knowledge and sanction. As an instance of the abundant precautions taken for the child's well-being mention may be made of the fact that after much enquiry about the type of milk that would best agree with the child, a particular breed of goats was procured with great difficulty. At the age of three the child was deprived of the affection and care of his mother who died in 1777. But loving servants and officials tried to fill the gap as best as possible.

An event of great importance that took place in Sawai Madhav Rao's regime was the Maratha success in the battle of Kharda* which took place on March 11-12, 1795, between Nawab Nizam Ali of Hyderabad and the Maratha Government. The Peshwa was present at the battle. The Maratha force consisted of 84,000 horses, 38,000 foot with 182 guns, the Nizam having 45,000 horses, 44,000 foot and 108 guns. The Nawab on being defeated accepted the terms of the victors which took some days to settle. Arriving back at Poona on May 1, the Peshwa received an unprecedented welcome and a grand ovation. Gold flowers were showered upon him when he marched in procession through the brilliantly illuminated city.†

The young Peshwa died the same year in October at the age of 21 without leaving any male issue. Whether he killed himself or whether his death was accidental has not so far been established. But the facts may be briefly narrated. From about the middle of September he was having some fever. On the day of Dasehra which fell on October 22 he headed the customary procession on an elephant. He swooned during the ride and was immediately brought back to the palace. The abnormal strain had its consequence on his delicate constitution. Suddenly leaving his bed in the morning of October 25 he proceeded to the balcony in a state of fever and possibly delirium and fell down the not very high railings of those days into the water-fountain on the ground floor. He was injured in the thigh, two of his front teeth were broken and he lost consciousness. Medical attention was at once given and regaining consciousness he opened his eyes. But his end was come and he peacefully died with the setting sun of October 27.

The sad end of this prince, who became a ruler on the very day of his birth and who was so fondly and tenderly brought up, proves once again how death does not miss its appointed time. There must have been many servants attending the sick monarch, and yet death made its stealthy way to its victim, dodging the attendants, made him quit his bed in an instant and carried him in the next to the balcony and the ground below. For how else one is to explain that, as the delirious patient walked into the balcony, there was none to hold him back. All that was done to save him was that a servant merely made " a sign for him to go back".‡

*Kharda is 150 miles east of Poona.

†Sardesai, volume III, page 301.

‡*cf.* Sardesai's account. He says that on the morning of the fateful day the Peshwa "suddenly left his bed and walked in the balcony, but a servant made a sign for him to go back At this he fell down the railings . . . ." (volume III, page 306). From the description it appears that this servant was not one of the attendants, but some miscellaneous employee working on the ground floor below.

Explanations of the fatal incident have been attempted. It is said that the Peshwa took his own life in disgust. But the description of the happening leading to the disgust leaves much room for doubt in its possibility. The happening refers to the correspondence, intended to secure a personal meeting, which Bajee Rao was having with the Peshwa. Bajee Rao was then confined at Junnar with one Balwant Rao Nagnath as the guardian and through whom the correspondence passed. This was being done without the knowledge of Nana Fadnavis for if he had known he would never have allowed it. The Peshwa's letter written in his own hand and telling Bajee Rao how happy he would be in arranging a visit was intercepted with Nagnath at Poona whereupon the Nana immediately put him in confinement. The Peshwa first denied having written the letter, but on Nana showing him the piece he hung down his head. Later, the Peshwa asked the Nana to release Balwant Rao who was innocent and who, the Peshwa pleaded, should not be punished for what he, the Peshwa himself, had done on his own responsibility. Nana not only declined these entreaties but went to the length of reproving his royal master. This gave the young man a mental shock from which he never recovered. He lost his cheer, grew sullen and downcast day by day and ultimately ended his life by suicide.

Peshwa Sawai Mahdav Rao was well and affectionately served by his ministers, sardars and other high dignitaries. Of these the one of particular interest to the reader was Ram Shastri, the Chief Justice, who had been recalled to his post after the end of Raghunath Rao's regime and who continued to preside at the Peshwa's judiciary until his death in October 1789.

J—CHIMNAJI APPA

THE EIGHTH PESHWA

Born.	*Died.*	*Peshwa.*
1784.	1830.	*June to Octr.* 1796.

On the death of Sawai Madhav Rao Narain struggles and intrigues began among the Ministers as to the person to be put on the vacant gaddi. Nana Fadnavis the principal Minister was the moving figure in the drama that followed.

The only surviving male members of the Peshwa family were now the three sons of Raghunath Rao. The eldest of these was Amrit Rao, who had been adopted by Raghunath Rao when no heir to his body had been born, and Bajee Rao (20 years) and Chimnaji Appa (11 years), the two natural sons born subsequently. Nana Fadnavis had no liking for any of these on the ground that they were the sons of one who was regarded as a murderer. The Nana's original plan was to make Yashoda Bai, the Peshwa's widow, then only 15 years of age, adopt a son of his choice and for this purpose he brought many a youngster into Poona. But this plan did not materialize as others thought that when there were eligible male members in the family of the Peshwas the bringing in of a new family was wholly uncalled for. This meant that the eldest natural son ought to be chosen. But for reasons of his own Nana Fadnavis thought of giving the *masnad* to Bajee Rao's younger brother, Chimnaji Appa, but this could not be possible in the normal course of things because Bajee Rao was in every way eligible and could not be allowed to be superseded by his younger brother who had no claim in the lifetime of Bajee Rao. To meet the difficulty Nana Fadnavis hit upon a novel plan by which Chimnaji Appa was to be adopted as son by the late Peshwa's widow; the adoption

creating a better right in favour of Chimnaji who could then claim the succession as the son of the late Peshwa, thus excluding the more remote Bajee Rao. This was intended to serve a two-fold purpose :

(*a*) it would automatically exclude Bajee Rao whom the Nana disliked most ;

(*b*) it would facilitate the repayment of the loans which the Nana had taken in the name of the late Peshwa from several bankers, because the adopted son would be obliged, according to time-honoured practice and having the sanction of the *shastras*, to discharge the debts of his father ; such an obligation would not necessarily attach to an heir who succeeded not by the right of son-ship, but as a remote collateral.

This plan, however, did not find favour with a section of the court who were supporting Bajee Rao. It seems there was no hurry to fill the vacancy so the game of intrigue went on for some time between the parties. In the end Nana Fadnavis out-witted the others and Chimnaji Appa was forced against his will into a palanquin on May 12, 1796, and conveyed to the Shaniwar Palace, the residence of the Peshwa, there to be adopted by the little Yashoda Bai on May 25 with due ceremony The robes of office were soon requisitioned from the Chhatrapati and the investiture took place on June 2 in a grand style in open darbar. The Peshwa's seat which had remained vacant for seven months was now filled.

But Chimnaji Appa was not destined to occupy that seat for long. For many reasons, Nana Fadnavis now began to doubt the correctness of his move in not supporting Bajeee Rao. So he decided to rectify the supposed error and this again resulted in a series of intrigues in which the Nana was for a time under a cloud and had to leave Poona. He protected himself in the mountain fastness of Mahad and from there carried on his secret moves. Others, who too desired to undo Chimanji's succession, were not wanting. Chimnaji himself was a Peshwa only in name, the real power vesting elsewhere. On October 27, 1796, he was taken prisoner. The news of his contemplated arrest reached one of his powerful supporters who taking the young prince out of the palace mounted him on his own horse and hastily fled Poona. He was pursued and captured along with Chimnaji who was made prisoner. Thus, the poor Chimnaji, who was made Peshwa against his own wishes, was out of that office within the space of five months.

K—BAJI RAO II

THE LAST PESHWA

Baji Rao, the ex-Peshwa's elder brother, was now to wear the robe and to become known in history as Baji Rao II. It was during his regime that the Marathas ceased to be a sovereign ruling power making room for the British. In this respect his Peshwaship is important and needs separate treatment in a fresh chapter which follows.

ANNEXURE

POONA AND THE SHANIWAR PALACE

The seat of the Peshwas was Poona. When Shahu, on release from the Mughal camp in 1707, came back to his home country, he established his headquarters at Satara from where the administration was conducted. But his Prime Minister, the first Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath, had his old residence at Poona where the members of his family resided. The Peshwa himself was almost constantly busy with his campaigns and had no fixed abode anywhere. But as the capital of the kingdom was at Satara, he stayed there when not engaged elsewhere. It was the second Peshwa Baji Rao I who built a regular residence for himself at Poona and this was the famous Shaniwar Palace an account of which appears later in this annexure.

Since the construction of this palace, Baji Rao used to stay at Poona conducting state affairs from there and going to Satara only as occasion required. This was possible because Maharaja Shahu had left the affairs of the kingdom almost entirely into the hands of the Peshwa. After the death of Shahu in 1749 the domestic disputes between his successor, King Ram Raja, and his grandmother, Tara Bai, made it difficult for the administration to be properly carried on from Satara. As Ram Raja was merely a figure-head and as power now completely vested in the Peshwa, he formally and completely transferred the headquarters of the administration from Satara to Poona. This was during the Peshwaship of Balaji Baji Rao and from that time Poona became the capital town and the nerve-centre of the Maratha empire.

Poona lays no claim to antiquity. Its history dates back only to the seventh century and according to local tradition it was only a small hamlet in 618. It was in the time of Ala-ud-din Khilji, the Delhi Emperor, that the place began to develop, when in 1290 it was occupied by the Emperor's troops. In 1595 Poona formed part of the jagir of Maloji Bhonsle, the grand-father of Shivaji the Great.

The name Poona is of Sanskrit origin and has been formed from "punyapur" (cleanser) and probably refers to the holy meeting of the rivers Mutha and Mula close to which it is built. Its religious position also does not appear to have an ancient origin because the earliest known remains in the neighbourhood are believed to belong to the seventh century.

The city is situated south-east of Bombay at a distance of 119 miles on the right bank of the Mutha river. The other river, Mula, also flows by, joining the Mutha on the north. There is yet a third river, Bahiroba, tributary to the other two. The city is mostly surrounded by uplands and hills except on the south-west. The three rivers constitute the chief beauty of Poona.

During the time of the Peshwas and even considerably thereafter Poona was built in an irregular fashion with only two main streets and many broken and narrow-winding lanes. The roads though well-kept and clean were narrow with side-gutters which at places were covered by stone slabs. The overhanging irregular wood work in the buildings, the sharp turns and windings and the variety in size and style of houses made some of the streets picturesque. Trees planted at the road sides, or oftener hanging from some garden or temple enclosure, gave many of the streets greenness and shade.

The third Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (1740—1761) had decided to build a wall round the whole city. The story is told that King Ram Raja (1749—1777) of Satara ordered the work to be stopped because in his opinion only villages should be walled and not large towns with powerful masters. There is, however, another version about the stoppage of the work, namely that which is mentioned by Grant Duff. According to it, the Peshwa, on reconsideration, decided that the walls might be a danger because their strength might tempt the Head of the State to stand a siege in the city instead of retiring to the strong hill fort of Purandhar.

Poona has been famous for its flowers. In 1885 there were 89 flower-sellers or *phoolmalis*. The shops are arranged on wooden boards covered with a wet cloth. The flowers and garlands remaining undisposed of after the day's sale are sold to perfumers who extract essence from them. In and about that year, the flower supply of Poona was so great that large quantities were sent to Bombay. As many as 1,000 garlands and 3,000 nosegays could be had at a few hours' notice.

Poona attained great importance during the regime of Peshwa Madhav Rao I, when India looked to that city as a model of administrative perfection. The city then was under the able governorship of Naro Appaji who earned a unique reputation for efficiency, justice and tranquillity in the city affairs for half a century.

The presentation of betel leaf is the traditional practice in India for showing respect or favour. This practice was scrupulously followed in the court of the Peshwas. A large consumption of betel leaf in Poona was thus inevitable. But these had mostly to be imported. The average imports in or about 1885 amounted to 60,500 maunds valued at Rs.3,25,000. Exports averaged 37,500 maunds valued at Rs.2,00,000. This meant that the consumption of betel leaf in Poona itself was 23,000 maunds valued at Rs.1,25,000. Before being used, the leaves are cured. Poona is known as having the best-cured leaves in the South. To remove the harshness and bitterness of the fresh leaves, they are kept closely packed till the sap dries. The leaves then grow soft with a shining yellow.

Among the markets of Poona, the cloth market is particularly important. In 1885 cloth was chiefly brought from Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Dharwar, and Sholapur. Cloth from Bombay mills was also brought along with European piece-goods. During the time of the Peshwas there were special shops for the sale of variegated cloth of which Hindu women make their bodices. In those days a cloth merchant's shop generally consisted of an outer or show room and an inner room used as a godown. The shops were scrupulously clean and cushions spread round the foot of the walls for customers to sit on and lean against. The goods were kept in the shelves along the walls. The shop front used to be shaded by red curtains which kept off the glare and the dust and caused a mellow red light which showed articles, specially coloured goods, to advantage. The leading cloth merchants of Poona were men of capital.

Poona of 1885 had a fair number of newspapers. As many as 9 newspapers were published, 2 of which were English dailies, 1 Anglo-Hindustani bi-weekly and 6 weeklies (1 English, 1 Anglo-Hindustani and 4 Marathi).

During the time of the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, the officer who was in charge of the police at Poona used to be paid a lump sum of Rs.9,000 a month to cover the pay of his subordinates, namely, constables, horse-patrols and other employees. He was answerable for the amount of property plundered whenever the Peshwa thought proper to call on him, that is to say, he had to make good the value of the property plundered. Still, his appointment was reckoned lucrative as the pay of his establishment was very low and both he and they derived much profit from unavowed exactions. With all these drawbacks, however, the city police has been described as good. Murders and robberies attended with violence and alarm were rare and complaints of the insecurity of property were never heard.

The earliest available records show that in 1780 Poona had a population of 1,50,000 persons. It fell considerably in the first eight years (1796—1804) of the reign of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II. This was due mainly to the depredations of Daulat Rao Scindia, and his father-in-law, Sarzarao Ghatge, and Yashwant Rao Holkar and later to the great famine of 1803. At the beginning of the British rule in 1818, it contained about 1,30,000 souls.

Poona had no railway station until 1858, that is a year after the great "mutiny". With the opening of the station in that year Poona has been making progress all round.

In the city of Poona and its environs, there are many objects of historical importance, mainly palaces and mansions.

Poona acquired fame as a centre of learning from the time of the Peshwas who patronised men of letters.

Balaji Baji Rao, the third Peshwa, in particular, spent vast sums in attracting to Poona learned scholars and famous poets from all parts of the country. The other Peshwas had also not lagged behind. Baji Rao II, with all his faults, has at least the credit of assisting by monetary awards all kinds of scholars who used to flock to Poona during his regime

THE SHANIWAR PALACE

This palace was built at Poona as a personal residence by the second Peshwa, Bajee Rao I. As in the case of the wards of Poona, the palace was named after the sixth day of the week. It was regarded at that time as the finest modern mansion in the Deccan. It was a huge but imposing building in an enclosure of four-and-a-half acres.

The site was chosen under a peculiar superstition. The story is told and believed in Maharashtra that Bajee Rao, when out riding, saw a hare turn on a dog at this spot. Believing that a house built on such a site could never be taken, he chose the place for the building.

When the palace was under construction, Maharaja Shahu told the Peshwa not to put the main entrance to the north, as that would mean a war with Delhi, the Mughal capital, of whose ruler, Shahu always considered himself a vassal.† In deference to the royal wishes, the construction of the gate was stopped and it was not completed till Shahu's death (1749) by the third Peshwa, Balaji Rao.

The palace was enclosed by a fortified wall, 200 yards long, 150 yards wide and rising to a height of 20 feet. Of the five gateways, one was known as the Mastani Gate, after Bajee Rao's Muslim mistress who had separate apartments in the building. This gate was named after her because she used to pass through it.

The huge wooden doors of the gates were thick-set with iron spikes to ward off attack by elephants in any possible insurrection. The palace was a six-storeyed building with four large courts or chauks and several smaller courts. The courts were called either from the objects for which they were built or the persons who occupied them. Thus, one court was called Pakwan Chauk or the Sweet-meat Court; Savitri Bai's Chauk was another name after a lady of the Peshwa's family.

The halls or diwan-khanas derived their names from the decoration in them or from the use to which they were put. One was called the Kachehry Dewan-Khana or the Audience Hall where statesmen and other dignitaries were received. This was also called Ganesh Mahal as an image of that god—who was the family deity of the Peshwas—was installed in it.

Another was called Hasti-Danti Dewan-Khana or the Ivory Hall because it had an ivory ceiling. A third was called Arsi Mahal because its walls and ceilings were all covered with mirrors.

The pillars separating the main halls were of wood-cut-in-the-cypress pattern and were joined together on the top by thick cuspated arches. Ceilings were covered with wooden dressery in different patterns. The wood-work was painted with figures of trees and men or scenes from the *Puranas* in enamel and gold. The stone-work inside the court was finely chiselled and polished.

Most of the important chauks had central fountains. It was on one of these that the Peshwa Madhav Rao II fell from an upper storey of the palace, broke his legs and teeth and died after two days.

All round the palace thick iron chains were hung to ward off lightning and evil spirits. From a cistern in the palace water was raised to the sixth storey and from there carried to the various parts of the palace. There is a story that during the construction of the building, no one except a mason thought of the water arrangements to be made. This skilful person stealthily built a duct in the wall and made a reservoir near the Ganesh Gate. After the completion of the structure, the Peshwa, while arranging to bring water from an aqueduct into the palace, found no way to do so except by pulling down a part of the enclosure wall with the building on it. The mason then came forward and showed his secret construction. For his foresight he received a village in reward.

The palace was destroyed by fire during the British regime in March-April,1827 The fire raged for about a fortnight. In spite of all efforts, almost the whole of the palace was destroyed. Among the parts saved was the Mirror Hall which was later removed. All that now remains of it are portions of the enclosure wall.

(These descriptions of Poona and the Shaniwar Palace are mainly based on the Poona Gazetteer.)

†This is not strange because although Shahu had been kept captive by Aurangzeb, the latter treated him with consideration during the long years of his captivity. After the death of Aurangzeb his son, Azam Shah, released him to take charge of his dominions. It was in gratitude for these things that Shahu owed sincere allegiance to Delhi.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LAST PESHWA, BAJI RAO II

A. UNPOPULAR RULE

B. END OF AN EMPIRE

ANNEXURE : LORD VALENTIA MEETS THE PESHWA

Born : 1775. *Ruled* : 1796–1818. *Died*. 1851.

"He was more sinned against than sinning."

A. UNPOPULAR RULE

CHIMNAJI's place in the Shaniwar Palace was, on December 6, 1796, taken by Baji Rao. After his investiture with the robes of office on the previous day, he marched in procession through the city of Poona to take his abode in the ancestral residence of the Peshwas. He is known in history as Baji Rao II, the first Baji Rao being his grand-father and the second Peshwa (1720—40).

The regime of Peshwa Baji Rao II was an eventful one culminating, as it did, in the dissolution of the great Maratha empire. But space permits us to deal here only with some of the principal events of his reign.

On becoming Peshwa, Baji Rao set free all those advisers and associates of his father who had been punished with imprisonment during the last regime. He brought them near his person and spent lavishly on his favourites, all unworthy men. The result was maladministration and discontent among the people. But Baji Rao was indifferent to these, busying himself in prayers, worship, religious rites, personal comforts and the enjoyment of a youthful life. He shared these with his friend and benefactor the Scindia Daulat Rao who was only six years younger.

Notwithstanding these failings, which were common to him and his contemporaries, Baji Rao would have become a successful ruler and would not have lost his kingdom in 1818 had he put faith in Nana Fadnavis, the able Prime Minister of his predecessor and on whose death in 1800 "departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government".* Baji Rao's devotion to God and religion was supplemented by perseverance, learning and eloquence and these stood him in good stead during the time he occupied the gaddi. He was let down by his advisers who had neither character nor ability nor a standing in society. Not that Baji Rao did not realize the worthiness of the Nana and the unworthiness of those on whose counsel he acted, but he was a victim

*These were the words used by the British Resident at Poona, Colonel Palmer, in his report to the Governor General. Grant Duff, the historian of the Marathas has thus written about him: "Nana Fadnavis was certainly a great statesman. His principal defects originated in the want of personal courage and in an ambition not always restrained by principles. His life was entirely public. In private he was a man of strict veracity, human, frugal and charitable. His whole time was regulated with the strictest order, and the business personally transacted by him almost exceeds credibility. Nana doubtless shines out as the last genius produced by the Maratha nation". At the time of his death he was 58 years.

of circumstances. The greatest circumstance against him was that he was the son of parents who were believed to be the murderers of their nephew, the young Peshwa Narayan Rao.

Of the other circumstances mention may be made of the fact that for his elevation to Peshwaship, Baji Rao was under great obligation to Daulat Rao Scindia, a youth with no principles but with great power and influence. On this friend Baji Rao depended for advice in all important matters. But even this would not have been so disgustful had not the Scindia been under the influence of the vicious Sharza Rao Ghatge *alias* Sakharam or Tuljoji who had contrived to give his beautiful daughter, Baiza Bai, in marriage to him. This Sharza Rao is regarded as the most evil person in Maratha history.* He had influence on Baji Rao too. Under the spell of these two, Baji Rao was persuaded to do many foul things which ultimately brought his own downfall. It was primarily due to the instigation of these persons, coupled with his own dislike for Nana Fadnavis, as the principal opponent of his late father, that Baji Rao had Nana Fadnavis arrested and confined at the end of the year 1797 believing him to be the chief cause of his troubles.

The Scindia was demanding from Baji Rao money for his troops to which the latter's answer was that he was so poor that he had no oil for the lamps of his palace, no betel leaves ; not even rice for daily food. So he gave written permission to Scindia to seize Nana and take his treasure, estimated at several crores, by force and whatever else could be obtained from Nana's followers and partizans.† Scindia and Sharza Rao exploited this order in the most ruthless manner.

The divine law of retribution has its own course and it was not long before Baji Rao was overtaken by it.

In October, 1802, the Peshwa Baji Rao fled Poona on the defeat of the combined forces of his own and Daulat Rao Scindia at the hands of Yashwant Rao Holkar in the great battle of Hadapsar‡ which is also known as the battle of Poona. It was fought on the eve of the Diwali festival and resulted in the enormous loss of 6,000 killed and 4,000 wounded on the side of the Peshwa and 5,000 killed and wounded on Yashwant Rao's side. The victory was entirely due to the valour of Yashwant Rao who though numerically much inferior guided and encouraged his devoted men by racing about on his horse fearlessly in the thick of the battle.

The cause of this tragic war was personal animosity between the Scindia and Yashwant Rao Holkar. On his death at the camp of Poona in 1797, Tukoji Rao Holkar left four sons, Kashi Rao, the eldest, but an idiot, Malhar Rao, Vithoji and Yashwant Rao, the youngest and illegitimate. With the contrivance of Daulat Rao Scindia, Kashi Rao secured the succession to which he was legally entitled, but to which the three younger brothers were unitedly opposed. The latter forming a separate group laid plans of capturing Kashi Rao and putting in Malhar Rao in his place. On becoming aware of this Daulat Rao sent his men to capture Malhar Rao who was attacked and killed in an unguarded moment a month after his father's death. He had kept awake through the whole of the expiring night to

*Sharza Rao let loose a veritable hell in Poona and its neighbourhood after getting Nana Fadnavis confined. The people were subjected to indescribable atrocities to disgorge all their wealth. While this cruel plunder was going on the marriage of Baiza Bai was solemnized with pomp the like of which had never before been seen in Poona. Some days after the marriage which took place in February, 1798, Sharza Rao took up his residence in Nana's house and there in the very room of Nana's daily worship goats were slaughtered every day. The populace of Poona looked upon this man as the god of death incarnate—Sardesai, volume III, pages 33—37.

†Sardesai, volume III, page 383.

‡Hadapsar is a village near Poona and the battle was fought on the plains of this and two other villages.



BAJI RAO II

(By courtesy of Chitrashala Press, Poona)

The second Baji Rao was a ruler of keen intellect and refined manners. He excelled in the art of eloquence and in the accessories of kingship but the antecedents of his father, coupled with his own unworthy advisers, spelt his ruin.

A lover of learning himself he patronised scholars who were attracted to his court to benefit by his bounty. It was to a large measure due to his munificence that Poona earned the reputation as a seat of learning, a reputation which survives to this day.



NANA FADNAVIS

By courtesy of Chitrashala Press, Poona

The renowned statesman with whose death in 1800 the Maratha Government lost all its wisdom. He was 58 at the time of his death and had lived a strictly regulated life transacting personally a stupendous amount of public business. If Peshwa Baji Rao had conducted his affairs according to the advice of this fore-sighted minister the course of Maratha history, and consequently of Indian history, would have been different. But under the influence of vicious advisers Baji Rao ignored the Nana and was even privy to his bad treatment. *However, the divine retribution took long in overtaking* the Peshwa who paid for his sins in 1818 when the British seized his Kingdom.



BAPU GOKHALE

On being pursued by British armies almost all his general relations and adherents deserted the Peshwa Baji Rao but not the gallant Bapu Gokhale. He remained faithful to his master until his last breath when he was killed in the battle of Ashta. After the death of this faithful commander Baji Rao lost all hope of regaining his position. He ultimately delivered himself to General Malcolm in the morning of June 3, 1818.



VISHRAMBAUG VADA, POONA

By courtesy of [illegible]

Peshwa Baji Rao was a ruler of aesthetic tastes with particular love for erecting buildings. This palace was one of the many magnificent buildings constructed by him. Tradition has it that Baji Rao named it after his favourite gardener Vishram. On the departure of Baji Rao from Poona in 1818, the royal buildings fell into neglect and today only their stray remnants remind the visitor of the excellence of the original structures. This impressive facade is all that remains of the beautiful palace.

meet the attack of which news had reached him. At dawn he undressed himself and went to sleep feeling that the intended attack had been put off. It was in this unguarded state that Scindia's men fell upon him.

On their brother's death, Vithoji and Yashwant Rao took to a life of brigandage. Each collected a large and separate following and devastated the territories of the Scindia and the Peshwa in retaliation. Both worked in separate areas. Vithoji became a terror to Baji Rao. Having devastated large tracts of the Poona kingdom by plunder and fire he proclaimed himself as an agent of Amrit Rao and declared that Baji Rao was incompetent and worthless. He caused great havoc in the Peshwa's domains ; "there hardly remained a sign of Baji Rao's rule beyond the limits of his capital", writes Sardesai,* adding that "reports of the prevailing misery poured into his ears daily from all quarters".

Ultimately in April, 1801, Vithoji Holkar was captured and brought in chains before Baji Rao who in a fit of insane rage and on the wicked advice of one of his ministers ordered that he be punished by being trampled by an elephant—this was usually the punishment in those days for high treason.† The prisoner was tied to the feet of an elephant, dragged about in the palace compound and killed with horrid cruelty. For twenty-four hours thereafter the dead body was exhibited and only then was it allowed to be removed for the performance of funeral rites.

Though the punishment was not undeserved according to the standards of those days, several members of the Peshwa's court had pleaded against this form of punishment, but in view of the anarchy and chaos which this outlaw had created and the misery which he had brought on his innocent victims, the Peshwa's rage for vengeance was hard to soften. He even became unmindful of the consequences which his order might provoke on the part of the dashing Yashwant Rao and the other members of the House of Holkar.

And such consequences were not long in coming. Yashwant Rao who had been waging a bloody war against the Scindia in the latter's domains and in which there was fearful slaughter on both sides, now turned towards Poona. He first appealed to the Peshwa as the common master of the two to intervene adding that he, Yashwant Rao, would forget the tragic fate which his brother had met at the Peshwa's hands. He had several grievances against the Scindia, the foremost of which was the release of his nephew, Khande Rao Holkar, whom Scindia was holding as a prisoner.‡ Under the influence of the Scindia, with whom Baji Rao was very friendly on account of the assistance he had received from the former in getting the Peshwa's musnad, Baji Rao remained indifferent to the entreaties of Yashwant Rao who showed respect towards the Peshwa and whom he intended to do no harm. Baji Rao not only did not listen to Yashwant Rao, he went further and ordered, on the advice of one of his ministers and the Scindia, the confiscation of the whole estate of the Holkars. This exasperated Yashwant Rao to the utmost limit. The results were the battle of Hadapsar already described and the defeat of the Peshwa Baji Rao and his flight.

Baji Rao now sought the protection and the help of the British. For this purpose he

*Volume III, page 366.

†S. R. Sharma's *Making of Modern India* (1951), page 292, foot-note.

‡Khande Rao was the posthumous son of Malhar Rao. When the latter was slain by Daulat Rao Scindia's men, his wife, Jiji Bai, was in a state of pregnancy. She was removed to a place of safety in Poona. The son born to her was thus Khande Rao. He too with her mother was later secured by Scindia who kept them in confinement.

eventually reached the port of Bassein, a Maratha out-post near Bombay, in December 1802. On the last day of that month he made a treaty with the Company's Government. This is known as the Treaty of Bassein which, amongst others, contained the stipulation that the British shall protect Baji Rao's territory as their own and that for this purpose the Company shall permanently station in the dominions of Baji Rao a subsidiary force of not less than 6,000 regular infantry to be paid for by the latter by the cession to the British of districts carrying a revenue of Rs.26 lakhs a year.

After this treaty, the British began to make elaborate preparations to march to Poona for restoring Baji Rao to the Shaniwar Palace. Colonel Wellesley, the brother of the Governor General Lord Wellesley, was put in charge of the mission and the early months of 1803 were devoted by the two brothers to settling perfect plans to this end. They succeeded in mobilizing 60,000 troops, a number far exceeding any put in the field on any previous occasion in India. Colonel Wellesley then began his advance on Poona after issuing the following appeal :

"The Peshwa Baji Rao has sought the friendship and protection of the Company's Government. It is at his invitation that we are entering the Maratha country as friends. We have no desire to harm or hate anybody. We call upon Mamlatdars and all officials to join us cordially. We are stationing our guards to see that no damage is done to any peaceful member of society. Whatever provision of grain and other articles is needed for us, will be strictly paid for according to current rates."

At the same time the foresighted Colonel sent an assurance to Yashwant Rao Holkar at Poona that, if he refrained from interfering with the arrangements for restoring Baji Rao, the British would not disturb him. Earlier in January the Colonel had thus written to Yashwant Rao : "Baji Rao by solemn agreement has accepted our armed protection, and we are bound in duty to uphold it. In doing so the Governor General is intensely anxious to effect a reconciliation between Baji Rao and you. You have often expressed your readiness to remain loyal to Baji Rao. Now is the time for you to prove your *bona fides* by at once leaving Poona with your forces and going back to your jurisdiction. If you do so, the Governor General will get all your grievances redressed by Baji Rao. You have all along been friendly to the British power. Do preserve that sentiment by quitting Poona. If you don't do so, there is every chance of our relations being disturbed".

The Governor General too had proclamations issued in his name announcing the special advantages from the Company's Government to the general masses. Men serving the Indian Chiefs were told that if they joined the British army they would be treated with respect and attention without any distinction on racial grounds and with a guarantee about emoluments. Copies of these proclamations were widely distributed. At the same time military as well as civil officers were told to avoid harm or molestation being caused to the general populace from the field armies.

These diplomatic moves proved very effectual. Yashwant Rao Holkar knew that he could not withstand the onslaught of such a large British force as had been mobilized. He preferred discretion to valour. On February 25, he went to the Shaniwar Palace to receive the robes of departure from Baji Rao's wife who had been left behind when the Peshwa fled Poona, and from the wife of Amrit Rao. Then he quietly left the city. He was compelled to take this course on account of his failure to organize an effective confederacy against British arms. Moreover, he had become very unpopular on account of the third degree methods which he had followed for four months in extracting money from the residents of Poona by plunder causing untold misery to the people. By these means he was able to collect fifty lakhs though he actually needed twice the amount for his troops and administrative expenses.

The British plan was that Colonel Wellesley should advance upon Poona and there be ready to receive Baji Rao who would start from Bassein in the company of Colonel Close who had been the Resident at Poona before Baji Rao's flight. The plan succeeded admirably. Entering Poona on April 20, 1803, he visited the Shaniwar Palace two days later and noted its defence arrangements. He then sent message to Colonel Close at Bassein who, taking Baji Rao with him, started for Poona. On May 13, 1803, the Peshwa entered his capital and regained his seat amid gun salutes and shouts of joy. The event was announced by the British throughout India and guns were fired at Calcutta, Surat and other important towns. Thus was established the supremacy of British methods and diplomacy. After an exile of six and a half months the Peshwa was re-seated on the musnad of Poona against what previously looked like heavy odds, without the firing of a musket or the movement of a sword.

Lord Valentia, a well-known traveller, had come out to India in the beginning of the 19th century. He visited Poona in 1803 to gain first-hand knowledge of the Peshwa's court and the manner in which he lived and ruled. In his book of Travels, Lord Valentia has left a graphic account of his meeting with the Peshwa Baji Rao II. It gives an insight into the royal customs and manners of the Peshwas, and for the interest of the curious reader the description is reproduced in the Annexure to this chapter.

B. END OF AN EMPIRE

With the British Subsidiary Force to protect him from external as well as internal dangers, Baji Rao was now enabled to live a life of ease. The British representative was there to appropriate to himself the political functions of the head of the Maratha State, and Baji Rao was reduced to the position of a mere figurehead with a private establishment at the Palace. He held no durbars, received no visitors and called no conferences. He was quiet and happy with his routine of baths and prayers. During the four monsoon months each year he performed religious rites with the aid of eminent priests who were fed with extraordinary punctiliousness. He was defied by his subjects except when a British force was actually at his back.* He was not settled even in the country five miles from Poona.

From the very beginning of his rule Baji Rao had the handicap of being the son of a person who was believed to be a wicked man and the murderer of his own nephew. Added to this were his own shortcomings. In the result, he could secure no worthy ministers, nor faithful servants, nor could he distinguish between the loyal and the disloyal ones. Under advice from General (as he now was) Wellesley he adopted the foolish course of inviting people to dinners and then making them take an oath of loyalty in the presence of the deity—a practice which alienated the sympathies of even those who had some interest in him.

Although the Treaty of Bassein had restored his possessions, Baji Rao was never happy with the consequences, for he was now like a bird in a cage, a golden cage though. He had thought that the British would punish Yashwant Rao Holkar, but this did not fit into the general network of their programme. His other expectations too remained unfulfilled. Not only that, there were frequent frictions between him and the British who found it difficult to deal with him. Gradually the friendly

*Sardesai, volume III, pages 393-94.

terms between the two gave place to rancour and bitterness.

Thus, for some years, things went on to the discomfiture both of the Peshwa and the British. Then took place an incident which caused great estrangement between the parties. This was the murder, within the Peshwa's territory, of Gangadhar Shastri, a high officer of the Gaikwar of Baroda with whom the British were in Subsidiary Alliance. The Baroda Darbar owed a debt of some three crores to the Poona Government and it was to settle this question and the disputed accounts relating to it that Gangadhar Shastri had been deputed to the Poona Court. The deputation had been sponsored by the British Government who had a Resident at Baroda and who, to overcome the Shastri's reluctance to go, gave him a special guarantee of safety. Gangadhar Shastri arrived at Poona in January, 1814, and after some days was, in February, presented to the Peshwa to whom he delivered the presents he had brought. Negotiations on the subject of the debt were commenced in March, but the progress was, as was to be expected in a case involving such a large amount, very slow with little hope of a settlement acceptable to the creditor and the debtor. A whole year went by without any common ground of discussion being discovered.

Gangadhar made use of his long stay at Poona in performing the sacred thread ceremony of his son with great pomp and show, the Peshwa being present in person. The boy's marriage with the sister of Baji Rao's wife had also been settled and large-scale preparations for its performance at Nasik were made at the instance of Baji Rao who had settled the match. At the last moment, when everything was ready and the guests on the bride's side had arrived, the Shastri suddenly declined to celebrate the marriage for reasons which are not wholly explicable. However, the Peshwa bore this insult with a show of outward calm.

While all this had happened on the one hand, and his mission had almost reached the stage of final failure on the other, Gangadhar Shastri was murdered at Pandharpur. To this place he had gone from Nasik accompanied by the Peshwa and Trimbakji Dengle, a favourite officer of the Peshwa, for the purpose of offering worship to the famous temple of Vithhalji. On the evening of July 20, 1815, he went to the temple for a final bow to the deity at the repeated invitation of Trimbakji who had arrived there earlier—both of them were staying at different places. Night had now fully set in and while returning from the temple with a few unarmed men who were with him, Gangadhar Shastri was attacked by a band of armed men. They hacked him to pieces after he had reached barely a few paces from the temple door.

Whether the foul deed had been done at the instigation of Baji Rao or with his connivance or whether he had no hand in it, are matters which, together with the efforts made by the British to secure the person of Trimbakji, who was believed to have plotted the murder, are matters which must be left to be studied elsewhere. Suffice it here to say that the relations between the British, who had guaranteed the murdered man's personal safety, and the Peshwa Baji Rao became much strained.

The result was that the Peshwa began to make secret preparations for war for which the British were more than prepared. They delivered an ultimatum to the Peshwa for the apprehension and surrender of Trimbakji within a month's time and, as a guarantee against failure, obtained, under threat of occupying Poona, the possession of four Maratha forts in April, 1817. He was in no position to withstand a British attack, and as a result of further pressure the Peshwa was made to sign a treaty at Poona on 13th June following. By this treaty, Trimbakji was declared to be the murderer of Gangadhar Shastri, all the Peshwa's

territory outside Maharashtra was ceded to the British, the Peshwa was compelled to wihtdraw his vakils from other States and prohibited from keeping any correspondence with them. Thus, within fourteen years of Baji Rao's restoration, was extinguished the overlordship of the Poona Government over the Indian Chiefs, resulting in the final and open dissolution of the Maratha Confederacy.

This treaty had been signed by Baji Rao under extreme pressure and with a sense of bitter wrong. So he determined to fight the British after making the adequate preparations. Hostilities were ultimately opened on November 5, 1817, on which the famous battle of Kirkee was fought. The result was undecisive because Baji Rao failed to follow up the fight although heavily re-inforced. After an indecision of several days Baji Rao took, against the entreaties of his advisers, the precipitate action of leaving Poona and retreating to Purandhar taking his family, and whatever treasure he could, with him. The British were masters of the situation now; the Shaniwar Palace was occupied with the aid of only 25 troops who hoisted the British flag on it on November 17. The city of Poona with all State treasure fell, without any opposition, into the hands of the British who had announced that, in the event of resistance from the Peshwa's troops, the city would be bombarded. Guards were posted at various places, the normal business was resumed and the British officers opened an office in the Peshwa's palace to conduct the administration.

In this quiet manner, the Maratha empire, whose head was now a fugitive from his capital, virtually passed to the British who now had only to exact a formal deed of abdication in the following June.

For seven months from now till May, 1818, Peshwa Baji Rao was flying from place to place, enduring what Sardesai has called "a running siege by the British forces". On the way, he was joined by his loyal General, the gallant Bapu Gokhale, who had turned to protect his master and who fought many actions with the British. The decisive battle was fought on February 19, 1818, at Ashta (south-west of Mhow) where he was overtaken, while hurrying with his master towards Purandhar, by the forces under General Smith. Fighting bravely, he met a soldier's death.* Baji Rao did not wait for the result of the action and hurriedly made his way off with his wife and three ladies riding with him in male attire. One crore worth of treasure fell into British hands.

The British supported their armed strength by clever diplomacy. In order to induce his subordinates to give up their allegiance to the Peshwa, the Governor General caused a proclamation to be issued on February 11, 1818, stating the British case against the Peshwa and his regime. This instrument of diplomacy would bear reproduction :

"Since the assumption of the Government by Baji Rao, sedition and rebellion prevailed in various shapes. His authority was not at any time established in the country subject to his rule. When Holkar was in a state of rebellion, he abandoned the country and pusillanimously repaired to Bassein where he formed an alliance with the British Government and, being joined by the troops of the Hon'ble Company, was by them re-established in his government. The prosperity of the country revived under the Company's protection.

"In conformity with the principles of equity, it was the wish of the Company's Government to settle his dispute with the Gaikwad's Government and the latter dispatched their agent Gangadhar Shastri to Poona under the Company's guarantee. This Shastri was assassinated by a public officer of Baji Rao on the consecrated ground of Pandharpur. The Company's Government demanded the surrender of the murderer, Trimbakji; and a large army had to be assembled before he was put into our possession.

"Subsequently, Baji Rao despatched letters to foreign chieftains urging them to put their armies in a state of preparation, the object of which was to plunge the Company's Government into a state of war and

*In a note to Elphinstone (the Governor of Bombay), General Smith wrote about Bapu Gokhale as having "really fought like a soldier". Earlier, the valiant Gokhale had stoutly braved the death of his only son, Govind Rao, who had succumbed to exhaustion in December, 1817—Sardesai, volume III, page 492

expose it to injury. He made declarations, and reiterated them in various shapes, that he owed his political existence, as well as the happiness and tranquillity he enjoyed, to the Company's Government. In consideration of them, a fresh treaty was concluded in order to maintain his sovereignty, but to deprive him of the means of exciting disturbances.

"Thereafter, the Company's Government determined to adopt measures for the suppression of the Pindaris, which Baji Rao acknowledged as highly beneficial to him and in which he offered his hearty co-operation. Under this cloak he remitted his treasure to foreign chiefs for objects hostile to the Company's interests. Then he suddenly equipped his army and attacked the Company's troops, plundered and burnt the residence and cantonments of the British representative. Two British officers were put to death in the vicinity of Talegaon. The Peshwa recalled to his presence the murderer of Gangadhar Shastri, Trimbakji Dengle.

"The Company's Government are satisfied that Baji Rao is unfit to rule over his empire. Measures are in progress to deprive him of all public authority. A light force has been despatched in his pursuit. In a short period nothing will remain connected with Baji Rao, and measures will be adopted for the enlargement of the Raja of Satara who will be established in a principality for the maintenance of his own rank and the dignity of those of his court. In prosecution of these measures, His Highness's flag has been displayed in the fort of Satara and satisfactory assurances given to his adherents. The Maharaja will administer the territories that will belong to him.

"In the territories reserved to the Hon'ble Company, their authority will be established without prejudice to the watans, inams and allowances. Every individual will be secured from tyranny and oppression.

"Those who are in service of Baji Rao should withdraw from it and retire to their habitations within two months; the failure to do this will ruin them. The public officers who are in the employ of Baji Rao should report and return to their homes; they should afford no assistance to Baji Rao nor make payments of revenue to him. The watans and lands of all public officers who afforded aid to Baji Rao will be forfeited. *Dated 11th February, 1818, 5th Rabilakhar.*"

This proclamation was a master-stroke of diplomacy and statesmanship. Taking advantage of the offer, a large portion of Baji Rao's followers left him. The British army was now in his pursuit. His fate was completely sealed.

Baji Rao fled from place to place, fighting actions, suffering defeat and being all the time relentlessly pursued by the Company's troops. His miserable condition has been graphically described in a contemporary Marathi ballad of which the following is the English rendering :

The Shrimant, brought up in the delicacies of the palace,
Is now roaming through the forests;
Under the blazing sun he seeks
His path through thorns and brambles;
He tends and tethers his own horse;
He spreads his thin scarf on rough ground;
And uses it as a bed during the night.
He eats his rice from a wooden bowl,
One day before sunset, another day late after midnight;
At every stage his favourite servants drop out.
Never, oh never, has such a fate
Fallen on any of Balaji Vishwanath's House;
Elephants, horses, camels, treasure,
All are being left behind.
What a fate has Baji Rao to bear in life;
As he journeys on, he addresses
To each, with tears in his eyes,
The words: "This is our last visit,
Be kind, and meet us if we live.

Nowhere in his large territories nor in the territories of the confederates of the empire could he get asylum. He was reduced to extremities. So long he had bravely faced his hardships and had preferred them to abject surrender. He was now deserted by nearly all his chiefs, except the chief of Vinchur, Vithhal Narsing Vinchurkar,* and even by his own brother. The very members of his family, he is reported to have said sorrowfully, had been forgetful of the ties of blood. The physical suffering augmented with mental agony at last broke his spirits. His able and faithful commander, Bapu Gokhale, had, as we have seen already, fallen fighting. So having lost heart and all hope of ever regaining his position, the miserable Peshwa sued for peace. He met† General Malcolm who was in charge of the military operations against him and whom he had known. He told the General in pathetic words that he could now turn to no

*He remained constantly loyal to Baji Rao, refusing to desert him to the last and take advantage of British offers, with the result that he was utterly ruined. He later met Governor Elphinstone and asked for the redress of his miseries, urging that his conduct in remaining loyal to his master deserved rather to be rewarded than censured. Elphinstone appreciated this argument and gave him a small jagir which the family still holds—Sardesai, volume III, page 58.

†The meeting took place in the Peshwa's camp in the village of Kheri.

other friend except Malcolm from whom he expected to receive protection and relief.

General Malcolm had no doubt a friendly heart towards Baji Rao, but he had to act within the bounds of the policy approved by the Governor General. So General Malcolm sent this mild but firm reply: "I am indeed your true friend, but I should ill perform the offices of friendship, if I should inspire you with false hopes. It is now time for you to exercise all the fortitude and the courage that you possess and bear misfortunes with manly resignation. It has been decided you cannot remain a sovereign, your residence in any part of the Deccan is an impossibility. The tribe to which your Highness belongs has been celebrated in all ages for courage. Brahman women have burnt themselves upon the funeral piles of their husbands. Men have thrown themselves from precipices to propitiate their deity. You are called upon for no such effort. The sacrifice demanded from you is the resignation of power which you do not possess and which you can never hope to regain, and your abandonment of the country which has been the scene of your misfortunes. This is all that you sacrifice and in return you are offered a safe asylum and liberal provision for yourself".

Baji Rao made an unsuccessful attempt for some modification of these terms, but Malcolm was resolute and in the morning of June 2, 1818, sent an ultimatum to Baji Rao to make up his mind within 24 hours adding that if he failed to take advantage of the terms offered, the operations against him would be renewed and in that event no further negotiations would be entertained. The force with Baji Rao now consisted of a bare 2,000 cavalry, 800 infantry and 2 guns. Even over this small body he had lost authority and feared open disobedience. So with a gloomy heart and despondent spirit the wavering Peshwa surrendered himself to General Malcolm. He arrived at the latter's camp on the morning of June 3, 1818.

The terms on which Baji Rao surrendered to the British are noteworthy in that they not only uprooted a once famous ruling family, but also put an end to the administration of a large territory by Indians by incorporating the great Maratha State in the dominions of the East India Company. The terms, known as *Propositions to Baji Rao* delivered by General Malcolm, are as follows:

Propositions to Baji Rao

(June 1,* 1818)

First: That he shall resign for himself and successors all right, title and claim over the Government of Poona or to any sovereign power whatever.

Second: That Baji Rao shall immediately come with his family and a small number of adherents and attendants to the camp of Brigadier-General Malcolm where he shall be received with honour and respect, and escorted safe to the city of Benaras, or any other sacred place in Hindustan that the Governor-General may, at his request, fix for his residence.

Third: On account of the peace of the Deccan, and the advanced state of the season, Baji Rao must proceed to Hindustan without one day's delay, but Brigadier-General Malcolm engages that any part of his family that may be left behind shall be sent to him as early as possible, and every facility given to render their journey speedy and convenient.

*It appears that though the document carried this date (having been written out late at night that day), it was actually delivered at day-break on June 2.

Fourth : That Baji Rao shall, on his voluntarily agreeing to this arrangement, receive a liberal pension from the Company's Government for the support of himself and his family. The amount of his pension will be fixed by the Governor General. Brigadier-General Malcolm takes upon himself to engage that it shall not be less than eight lakhs of rupees per annum.

Fifth : If Baji Rao, by a complete and ready fulfilment of this Agreement, shows that he reposes entire confidence in the British Government, his requests in favour of his principal jagirdars and old adherents, who have been ruined by their attachment to him, will meet with liberal attention ; his representations also in favour of Brahmans of venerable character, and of religious establishments founded or supported by his family, will be treated with regard.

Sixth : The above propositions must not only be accepted by Baji Rao, but he must personally come into Brigadier-General Malcolm's camp within twenty-four hours of this period, or else hostilities will be recommenced, and no further negotiations will be entered into with him.*

The surrender took place in General Malcolm's Camp at Mhow, the Peshwa being accompanied by his family and immediate adherents. Before coming over, the Peshwa felt somewhat shy of guards and sentries in the camp, and Malcolm again showed gentlemanly behaviour in sending a Lieutenant, by name Low, to meet the distinguished comer in advance. And thus by 10 o'clock, one who had been a monarch of a great and powerful kingdom was now an ordinary citizen craving at once the indulgence and the magnanimity of the very people against whom he had drawn his sword. He was no more *Srimant*, nor *Pant Pradhan* nor PESHWA, nor His Highness—but simply Maharaja Baji Rao.

The Governor General, Lord Hastings, first took exception to the large amount of pension that Malcolm had promised, but the latter put forward good reasons to justify the amount. And in due course the pension as well as the other terms of the agreement were approved and formally sanctioned by the Governor General.

Baji Rao's abdication left the Company master of a territory which in 1815 was yielding a net revenue of Rs.97 lakhs. Out of this territory the British set apart lands worth Rs.23 lakhs for the Chhatrapati of Satara. After defraying Baji Rao's annual pension of Rs.8 lakhs and other charges, a net revenue of Rs.62 lakhs came into the hands of the British Government. The British also confiscated lands of the Peshwa's sardars and dependents which added an annual income of Rs.25 lakhs. After accounting for administrative expenses there was a net saving of Rs.50 lakhs a year to the Company's Government. The British at once proceeded to divide their conquered territory into four divisions.†

How the British dealt with and subdued the other Maratha Chiefs—the Scindhia, the Holkar, the Bhonsla and the Gaikwar—are matters which belong to the larger sphere of Maratha history and so are outside the scope of this work.

Peshwa Baji Rao died in exile at Bithoor in 1851, at the age of 76. He left no male heir of his body, but had adopted a son named DHONDOO PANT NANA SAHEB whose name this book carries and after whose

*Aitcheson's Treaties, Volume III, pages 70-71.
†Sardesai, volume II, page 509.

death the family of Baji Rao became extinct. Baji Rao's younger brother, Chimnaji Appa, was granted by the British an annuity of Rs.2 lakhs. He retired to Varanasi in 1819 to die there in 1830. His line became extinct after him.

Baji Rao's adopted brother, Amrit Rao, had settled at Karvi in the Banda district. His descendants took an active part in the rebellion of 1857. On account of their youth they were pardoned by the British. Their offsprings are still surviving, receiving a pension from Government and continuing the memory of the distinguished family of the Peshwas who acquired a permanent place in the history of India.

ANNEXURE

LORD VALENTIA'S ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH PESHWA BAJI RAO II IN OCTOBER, 1803*

(*See* page 103)

(Lord Valentia was an English traveller who had come to see India. He visited Poona to gain personal knowledge of the Court of the Peshwa. The East India Company provided him with facilities for his tour. He was putting up with Colonel Close, the British Resident at Poona. The Colonel's bungalow was on the other side of the river)

AT FOUR in the afternoon of the 14th of October a deputation from the Court, the highest compliment the Peshwa could pay, came to the opposite side of the river from the *sangam* and Lord Valentia, accompanied by Colonel Close and their suites, set off. At starting, a salute was fired. The Peshwa's Minister for British Affairs and the Under Minister, attended by a large body of horse and some foot soldiers, led the procession and were joined by an escort of British infantry. In the place before the palace were drawn out the Peshwa's cavalry and infantry guard, and his elephants, by no means a splendid body. Kettle-drums were beating, the servants were all at their posts, and the crowd was considerable.

Lord Valentia waited a few seconds at the door till Sadashiv Mankeshwar, the Minister, had come near. He then left his slippers and, with Colonel Close supporting his left arm, stepped on the white cloth with which the floor was covered. He embraced the Minister and presented the officers of his suite. The Peshwa entered the room and stepped on his cushion or *gaddi*. Lord Valentia hastened towards him supported by the Colonel on his left and the Minister on his right. His Highness continued standing and slightly embraced Lord Valentia with his right hand. Lord Valentia was next presented to the Peshwa's brother who was on the right and who also embraced him. Lord Valentia then returned and presented to the Peshwa the gentlemen of his suite who were also embraced. They then sat down. The Minister was next to His Highness on the left, but rather behind. Lord Valentia was near to him. Next to Lord Valentia was Colonel Close and then the other European gentlemen. They had no chairs or cushions and were not allowed to put out their feet, as to show the sole was disrespectful. His Highness wore no slippers.

The etiquette of the Court was silence and when anything was said it was in a low

*This account has been taken from the *Poona Gazetteer*, pp. 414–19. It is based on Valentia's *Travels*, volume II.

whisper. Lord Valentia spoke to Colonel Close who translated it to the Minister, the Minister stretched himself out towards His Highness on his knees with his hands closed and raised, and, in a low voice, reported what Lord Valentia had said. By the same conveyance the answer was returned. Lord Valentia first asked after His Highness's health and was told that he was well and that he hoped Lord Valentia had arrived in good health. Lord Valentia then asked after the health of the Peshwa's brother. The message was carried across the room, in front of the cushion, by Anandrav. The answer was complimentary.

Then, through the Minister, His Highness expressed a wish that the party might retire into a more private place so that conversation might be freer. Lord Valentia immediately arose and followed the Peshwa into a very small room attended by Colonel Close, the Minister of the State, the Under Minister and the Minister of British Affairs. His Highness seated himself on a small Turkey carpet in the corner of the room. He placed Lord Valentia next to him on his left and the rest formed a part of a circle in front of him. The Peshwa then began a very interesting conversation in which he considerably relaxed from his etiquette, smiled, and frequently spoke immediately from himself to Lord Valentia and Colonel Close. With all the disadvantages of interpretation, Lord Valentia could perceive that the Peshwa gave a very elegant turn to the expressions he used. Among many other compliments, the Peshwa expressed a wish to give Lord Valentia a fete at his country house. To this Lord Valentia with pleasure agreed. This fete had been previously arranged and was to take place after the Peshwa had honoured Lord Valentia with a visit. On political subjects the Peshwa spoke fully and clearly and seemed much better informed than Lord Valentia had reason to expect.

After about an hour the party returned to the Darbar. Lord Valentia was so extremely tired with his position that it was with some difficulty he could rise, and for a few minutes was obliged to rest against the wall. No conversation passed after the Peshwa was seated on the cushion. Betel leaves were placed before him in a large gold plate ; on the top was a gold box containing a parcel of the same ; *attar*, rose-water and spices were in the same line. Anandrav, the Minister for British Affairs, gave rose water, *attar* and spices to Colonel Close ; to Lord Valentia he gave *attar* and rose-water. The party then rose, and His Highness with his own hand presented Lord Valentia with a gold box filled with betel leaves. The guests then made their salutations and retired, the Ministers attending them to the door.

The Peshwa and his brother were in plain white muslin dresses without a single jewel. The Minister had some handsome flat diamonds in his turban, a necklace of emeralds and large pearls, and ear-rings of gold from which hung the finest pearls Lord Valentia had ever seen. They were perfectly round and clear and were as large as the pupil of the eye. The palace was a fairly handsome building and was very clean. The Darbar-room was large, and was supported by handsomely carved wooden pillars. The State cushion was of white muslin richly embroidered in gold and coloured silk. With the exception of a few who carried silver sticks, the Peshwa's attendants stood round outside of the pillars.

Peshwa's Return Visit to Lord Valentia

ON THE 16th, to receive the Peshwa, Colonel Close pitched a large tent in front of his house, and two tents joined to it, without sides, so that they formed one very large room. The State cushion was sent forward and placed in the centre as at the Peshwa's own Darbar. When the Peshwa came in sight, Colonel Close mounted an elephant and advanced to meet him. Lord Valentia waited his approach at the door of the tent. The Peshwa came close up,

but did not dismount till the Minister, the Under Minister and the Minister for British Affairs had paid their compliments and had presented to Lord Valentia the different nobles and honourables who attended him. They made their salutations and passed into the tent. His Highness then descended from his elephant along with his brother who rode behind him. Lord Valentia made his compliments and, leaving a space on his right hand for the Peshwa to walk in, moved into the tent. All seated themselves as at the Darbar.

After a few compliments and while the dancing girls were singing and dancing, betel leaf and *attar* were placed on the ground before His Highness and he ordered them to be given to the *sardars* and other attendants. Lord Valentia then asked His Highness to allow him to robe the Peshwa and his brother. The Peshwa granted leave and the trays were brought forward and laid before them. Lord Valentia rose and, passing in front of the State cushion, began with the Peshwa's brother. A jewelled crest and other ornaments were set in his head-dress and a necklace of pearls with a pendant of coloured jewels was fastened round his neck. The Peshwa's head-dress and his neck were then adorned with jewels and in addition his wrists were encircled with diamond bracelets. He had a telescope, and a sweetmeat box, ornamented with a beautiful picture of the goddess Ganga. His brother had a sweetmeat box with god Indra painted on it. The figures were appropriate to their character.

Lord Valentia then gave betel leaves and *attar*; the *attar* was poured into Lord Valentia's hands, who gently rubbed it down both the shoulders of the Peshwa; this was done at the Peshwa's request, and was the highest compliment. His Highness was in such excellent humour that, though it was a public visit of ceremony, he frequently smiled and addressed himself to Lord Valentia and to Colonel Close. The Ministers did not receive the *attar* as it was Lord Valentia's wish that they should stay after the rest were gone.

Lord Valentia mentioned to the Ministers that a horse and elephant were at the gate as presents to His Highness. These were always given on State occasions, but without being exhibited, as was the practice in other courts.

It was nearly dark before the Peshwa left. The Ministers stayed a short time and received presents according to their rank, the jewels being tied by Colonel Close's Indian Assistant. They then received betel-leaves and *attar* from Lord Valentia's hands and departed.

The presents were provided by the East India Company. His Highness' were worth about £1,200 (Rs.12,000), the others' altogether nearly £800 (Rs.8,000).

(Then follows the description of the dinner party which the Peshwa gave at Hira Bagh, his country residence, in honour of the distinguished guests. The following are some parts of it.)

HIS HIGHNESS was in great spirits and observed that his father had always wished for the friendship of the English, but that it had remained for him to reap the blessings of it. The Peshwa then asked Lord Valentia if he would procure for him an Arab mare, and Colonel Close assured him that he would try his best. The ceremony at Lord Valentia's entrance was the same as on the former occasion and he was seated in a similar situation.

The party soon had notice to move upstairs: the Peshwa passing through a back door, while the guests mounted by a narrow staircase to a platform with two verandahs one at each end. In the farther verandah, a white cloth was spread with plantain leaves, one for each of the English gentlemen

present. On each leaf was a Brahman's dinner—rice plain and sweet, pastry thin as paper and rolled up, pastry cakes, bread and peas pudding. Along one side was a row of sweets like paints on a pallet ; on the other were seven different kinds of curried vegetables. On one side of the leaf were rice-milk, clarified butter, and some other liquids in small plantain-leaf pans, which were all excellent of their kind. The guests had taken the precaution to bring spoons, knives and forks which they used actively* out of respect to their host who soon joined the party by seating himself on the cushion, a little on the outside of the verandah.

When the guests had finished the Peshwa retired and the guests soon followed. After the guests had seated themselves below, betel-leaf was laid at the Peshwa's feet and served. Lord Valentia's servant had placed himself at the bottom of the line, and consequently served first. They proceeded upwards till they reached Lord Valentia, where they stopped.

The presents were then brought in, again beginning with Lord Valentia's servant. They consisted of a pair of shawls, a piece of brocade and a piece of cloth , the whole set worth about £20 (Rs.200) each. There was no visible difference between these and others presented to Messrs. Young, Sall, Murray and Smith. The gentlemen of the establishment were totally overlooked. Lord Valentia's presents were then brought forward which consisted of the same articles and a piece of muslin. There were also jewels in a tray.

All the presents were better than had ever been given on a former occasion, the shawls being new and good ones for this part of India. A horse and elephant were at the door. The horse was a fine animal and in good condition, a most unusual circumstance at Poona. The *attar* was given to Lord Valentia and Colonel Close by the Minister. The box of betel-leaf was delivered by His Highness himself. After this was over, a sword was given into the Peshwa's hands and by him presented to Lord Valentia. It was handsomely mounted in green and gold and had a very fine blade. The sword was not part of the real gifts of the ceremony and Lord Valentia, therefore, valued it the more, assured the Peshwa that he would hand it down to his son and his son's son, and kept it by him instead of delivering it to his servant as he had done for the trays.

A few compliments passed at taking leave and the Peshwa paid Lord Valentia the unusual compliment of requesting to hear of his welfare. The Minister attended the party as far as the end of the carpet and then took his leave. Lord Valentia's party returned through the town which was much larger than he had expected and the market much finer. There were several large houses, three storeys high ; the temples were insignificant ; the number of wretched objects** was small.

THE GREATEST EFFORTS OF A RACE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TRACEABLE TO THE LOVE OF PRAISE, AS ITS GREATEST CATASTROPHIES TO THE LOVE OF PLEASURE.

—Lord Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter III.

* They ate quickly so that they could finish before the Peshwa came amongst them.

** Poor famine-stricken people.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BRAHMAVART OR BITHOOR

A. PESHWA BAJI RAO'S CHOICE OF BITHOOR.

B. HISTORY :

- ANCIENT TRADITIONS.
- KINGS UTTANPAD AND DHRUVA.
- THE RAMAYANA PERIOD.
- DURING MUSLIM RULE.
- INCLUSION IN BRITISH TERRITORY.
- PART DURING THE 'MUTINY'.
- PRESENT IMPORTANCE.

C. PESHWA'S TEMPLE AND TATYA TOPE'S MANSION.

D. OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST :

- THE GHATS.
- OTHER PLACES.
- CALIGRAPHY AND SWEET-MEATS.
- LEGEND ABOUT SHIFTING OF DEEP STREAM.
- THE SUBEDAR FAMILY OF BITHOOR.

ब्रह्मावर्त सघन वन भारी, आयहुं त्यागि विदेह कुमारी ।*

—Lakshman to Ram in the Ramayana.

A. PESHWA BAJI RAO'S CHOICE OF BITHOOR.

IN MAY, 1818, Baji Rao II, the last Peshwa of Poona, suffered a severe reverse in a battle with the forces of the East India Company commanded by Brigadier-General

*I have come back after leaving alone in the dense and large forest of Brahmavart the daughter of King Videh (that is Seeta, the wife of Ram).

Malcolm. Lest the Peshwa might recoup himself or other developments unfavourable to the British might take place, General Malcolm hastened to make certain offers to Baji Rao with a view to obtaining his surrender. These offers were put in the form of *Propositions to Baji Rao* in a note of General Malcolm, dated June 1, 1818. One of the *propositions** was that if Baji Rao resigned the sovereignty of the kingdom of Poona he shall receive a pension of "not less than eight lakhs of rupees per annum". Another proposition was :

> "That Baji Rao shall immediately come with his family and a small number of his adherents and attendants to the Camp of Brigadier-General Malcolm, where he shall be received with honour and respect and escorted safe to the city of Benares, or any other sacred place in Hindustan that the Governor-General may, at his request, fix for his residence."

Accepting these terms, Baji Rao surrendered his kingdom. But he did not wish to settle at Varanasi which, though a place sacred to Hindus, was a big city full of din and clamour and the *ex*-monarch did not like to pass the days of his exile in the lime-light of publicity. He was in search of a quieter place with moderate amenities, sacred and with a salubrious climate, but not too much in the interior. Such a place he found in Brahmavart, commonly known as Bithoor.

Situation

Bithoor is a very ancient town situated on the right bank of the Ganga in 26° 37′ north and 80° 16′ east. It is at the extreme northern angle of the Kanpur tahsil at a distance of 14 miles from the city of Kanpur with which it is connected with a good metalled road which takes off from the Grand Trunk Road at Kalyanpur whence it runs to a distance of seven miles to reach Bithoor. The road is now known as NANA SAHEB PESHWA MARG. The place is also connected by rail—a branch line of the North-Eastern Railway takes off from the main line at Mandhana junction and terminates at Bithoor. The railway station is known as Brahmavart, though the post-office bears the name of Bithoor which is also the name of the town since a long period. At the time of Baji Rao, however, the place was connected with Kanpur only by road.

The branch railway line, known as the Kanpur-Brahmavart line was opened on November 10, 1885. Subedar Purushottam Rao Tatya† had contributed a sum of Rs.88,000 towards the cost of the line which until recently was known as "Subedar Bithoor's Line" (from Mandhana to Brahmavart). The Subedar Saheb had also been given a free family pass for travelling over the whole of the then B. B. and C. I. (Bombay, Baroda and Central India) Railway. At one time the authorities of the old B. B. and C. I. Railway were thinking of closing the line on account of the loss in its maintenance, and orders to this effect had already been passed, so it is said. The Subedar Saheb, who was a man of great influence and who at that time was in his 95th year, undertook the long journey to Bombay to meet the Agent. By his persuasion the idea of closing the line was given up.

Some time after the achievement of Independence (August 15, 1947) the Railway Board decided to disassociate the name of the Subedar family with this Line. The signboard at Mandhana announcing the line as the Line of Subedar Saheb of Bithoor was in consequence removed recently.

Just below Bithoor, the river Ganga is joined by another small river which rises in the Bilhaur tahsil of Kanpur and is known as Non. This is not to be confused with the

*There were six *propositions* in all, forming a sort of unilateral agreement. These have already been quoted in the chapter immediately preceding.

†A brief account of the Subedar family of Bithoor appears in Chapter 30, Section B.

river of the same name in the south of the district.

Area and population

Bithoor has a total area of 1,140 acres. It comprises several mohallas of which Bithoor Kalan, Bithoor Khurd, Nayaganj and Arazi Lashkar (or merely Lashkar) are the more important. Arazi Lashkar derives its name from the fact that this land was assigned by the British Government in revenue-free tenure to Baji Rao Peshwa for the maintenance of his troops. Previously, the land of Arazi Lashkar was included in the village of Ramel. It was acquired by Government from the original holders for assignment to Baji Rao. The original owners of the land continued to receive malikana even after the death of Baji Rao. Eventually, the land was purchased by the Subedar family of Bithoor whereafter the payment of malikana to the original holders ceased.

The town of Bithoor proper covers an area of 208 acres in all. In 1861 it was brought under the operation of the Chaukidari Act, 1856, and subsequently the provisions of the Village Sanitation Act, 1892, and section 34* of the Police Act, 1861, were put into force. The local self-government of the place is now in the hands of a Town Area Committee of which the present president is a member of the Subedar family of Bithoor. The town has recently been provided with electricity by the Kanpur Electric Supply Administration. The Kanpur Corporation proposes to include the town within its jurisdiction and to take over the municipal administration of the place.

The population of the town has also rapidly declined. Before the "Mutiny" the total in the year 1853 numbered 13,580, exclusive of 9,106 who lived in Ramel. It was reduced to 8,322 by 1865 and in 1872 it declined further to 7,768. It stood at only 5,760 in 1891. In the Census of 1951 the total for the Town Area of Bithoor was 2,528. There are many *ganga putras* in the town. Their occupation is to take charge of the pilgrims whom they put up in their own houses or in dharmashalas. They live mainly on the charity of the pilgrims.

Fairs and Markets

Three annual fairs are held in Bithoor. The Ganga Ashnan Fair is held on the full-moon (*poornamashi*) of Kartik coincidently with the fairs at Batesar and Sonepur. This is the most-largely attended fair in the whole district. According to the figures worked out in 1907, the number of persons attending the fair was 80,000. During the time of the Peshwa the figure was much larger, being in the neighbourhood of one lakh. During the time of the Peshwa and until much afterwards, the fair lasted for a week or ten days during which considerable sales of cloth, toys, pedlary and sweet-meats took place. Now, the fair lasts for one or two days only, but sales are brisk and shop-keepers come from distant places.

Another fair known as the Sankranti fair is held on *Poos Sudi* 11. On *Jeth Sudi* 10 takes place the Jeth Dasehra fair which too attracts a large number of persons.

A village market is held every Tuesday and Saturday near the Railway Station in Arazi Lashkar.

*Deals with punishment for certain offences on roads, etc., such as slaughtering of cattle, cruelty to animals, obstructing passengers, throwing dirt into streets, indecent exposure of person, neglect to protect dangerous places such as wells or dangerous structures.

B. HISTORY

ANCIENT TRADITIONS

The town of Bithoor is a place of great antiquity. It is here that Brahma, the god of creation, performed the great horse sacrifice for propagating the human race on earth. The story is told in the Puranas that the Lord Vishnu, after having created the earth, asked Brahma to create human beings to inhabit it. Thereupon, Brahma brought certain saints into existence, but they began to live a life of austerity and would not propagate their race. On the prayer of Brahma, the Lord Vishnu then advised him to perform a yagna (sacrifice) and to perform it at the most sacred place on earth—the forest of the name of Utpalaranya (उत्पलारण्य). So, Brahma performed the yagna here after installing the image of Lord Shiva and naming it Brahmeshwar Mahadeva. On the completion of the yagna Brahma created Swayambhuva Manu and his wife, queen Satrupa, through whom the world began to propagate.

At the place of the yagna, Brahma also fixed a nail of the shoe of the sacrificial horse. Legend has it that the nail which is now seen embedded in one of the steps of the Brahmeshwar Ghat in Bithoor is the original nail which, along with the temple of Brahmeshwar Mahadeva on the bank of the Ganga, commemorates the exact place of Brahma's yagna. On the occasion of fairs and other bathing days, bathers crowd to worship this nail with offerings of money and flowers.

On completion of the yagna, the forest of Utpalaranya became known as Brahmavart from which the popular name Bithoor has been derived.

KINGS UTTANPADA AND DHRUVA

Brahmavart was for a long time ruled by King Uttanpada. It was then a country between the rivers Saraswati and Drishadvati (1). The remains of an old fort on the right bank of the Ganga are even to-day pointed out as the fort of Raja Uttanpada. At this place his son, the celebrated Dhruva, was born (2). There is a temple known as the Dhruva Temple, in the premises of the fort. The main image here is of Lord Shiva, but on a niche there is a small statue in black stone of Dhruva too.

The big mound comprising the remains of the fort is on a high cliff below which flows the deep stream of the Ganga. The place is a protected monument under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904, and jurisdiction over it vests in the Union Department of Archaeology. The mound has a rocky strata (3) towards the side of the river—still a great portion of the area has been gradually eroded and a temple of Sri Hanuman situated right on the cliff is now in imminent danger of being washed away. It is to be hoped that the Director-General of Archaeology will have something done for the preservation of this ancient site in proper manner.

THE RAMAYANA PERIOD

It is in Brahmavart that the sage, Valmiki, the famous author of the Sanskrit Ramayan known after his name, had his hermitage. On that spot, which is on a high mound, there now stands an ancient temple known as the Valmiki Temple. The temple was renovated and added to by Peshwa Baji Rao II. In the premises of the temple there

(1) The identity of the rivers is not clear.

(2) N. L. Dey's Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India, pages 159 and 213.

(3) This might well be part of the buttress of the old fort.

is a place called Seeta-Kund which is said to mark the spot where Mother Seeta had disappeared in the bosom of the earth. There is also a masonry building called Seeta Rasoi (Seeta's Kitchen), and an old temple named Kapaseshwara, after another name of Sri Rama. An old tower with myriads of places for keeping earthen lamps, which in the good old days used to be lighted on the occasion of Dasehra, also stands within the precincts of the temple. Adjoining this tower there is a small verandah in which hangs an enormous brass-bell.

Tradition has it that it was in the area of Brahmavart forest that Mother Seeta was, in a pregnant state, left by Lakshman at the bidding of Rama. The exact spot is marked by the temple of Pariyar which is on the opposite bank of the Ganga at a distance of some six miles. It is said that in the olden days the deep stream of the Ganga flowed near that place. From here she was taken in protection by sage Valmiki who had his ashram (hermitage)* nearby. Two sons, Lava and Kusha, were born to her and these grew up to be boys of great courage and prowess.

When Rama performed the horse sacrifice, the sacrificial horse was let loose, followed by a large army. The kingdoms through which the horse passed either accepted the suzerainty of King Rama or, as a challenge, caught hold of the horse whereupon a battle followed. The horse passed through the area of Brahmavart and these sons of Rama tied it up. The inevitable battle then followed in which the brave boys, fighting alone and without knowing that they were fighting their own father, defeated the army of Rama. Eventually, however, the identity of both the sides became known and there was a happy meeting of Rama and his sons. According to the Ramayana of Valmiki, Lava and Kusha defeated the armies of their father. Thereupon, Rama himself went out to meet them in person, recognized them as his sons and is reconciled without further blood-shed to his loving wife, Seeta. The other version is that Lava and Kusha are defeated by the army of Rama and are slain in battle. At this moment Seeta, weeping for her sons, appears on the scene and over the bodies of their fallen off-springs a reconciliation takes place between Seeta and the remorseful Rama. The sons are then restored to life by their mother or father or Valmiki or some other miraculous personage.

Support to these traditions is provided by the following facts and circumstances :

(1) The name "Pariyar" is said to have been derived from *parihar* which in Sanskrit means "left". It is said that this name was given to the place from the fact that Mother Seeta was left here.

(2) Bronze arrows and spear-heads of enormous size have been found both in the village of Ramel, near Bithoor, and on the opposite bank of the Ganga near Bangarmau. These are still on view in a temple on the Brahmavart Ghat. It is said that these were used in the battle which took place here between Rama and his two unrecognized sons, Lava and Kusha : the arrows are said to have been used by the latter by whose name they are known.

(3) There is a village nearby of the name of *Ramel*. It is said that this is a corruption of *ran-mel* (रण-मेल) † that is the place where, after the battle, there was a reconciliation between Rama and his sons.

*According to another account the hermitage of Valmiki is placed at Chitrakoot, in the district of Banda, no mention being made of Bithoor.

†This literally means reconciliation in the course of a battle.

Little is known about Bithoor in medieval times though until after the "mutiny" it was one of the most ancient sub-divisions of the country. Tradition has it that it was here that Indal, of Alhakhand legend, was kidnapped.

DURING THE MUSLIM RULE

In the reign of Akbar the Great, a part of Bithoor pargana was included in the Sarkar of Kannauj belonging to the Suba of Agra. Later, along with the district of Kanpur, it fell into the hands of the Bangesh Nawab of Farrukhabad in 1738 and remained in his possession till 1754 when the Marathas occupied the Lower Doab. The Marathas, however, soon gave way again to the Nawab in 1762 who held the district of Kanpur until the close of 1771, when he was again superseded by the Marathas. The latter in turn were finally ejected in 1774-75 by Shuja-ud-Daula the Nawab Vazeer of Avadh. It was then included in the territories administered by Mir Almas Ali Khan, an *amil* (officer) of the Nawab-Vazeer. Almas Ali assigned* the village of Ramel (near Bithoor) in revenue-free tenure to Raja Bhagmal Jat, his maternal uncle, and the lands were, until the abolition of zamindari in 1952, held by the latter's heirs. Almas Ali Khan built a large mosque in Bithoor which can still be seen standing next to Lakshman Ghat. Raja Bhagmal built a large Katra with a Baradari.

INCLUSION IN BRITISH TERRITORY

In 1801, Bithoor, along with the district of Kanpur and other large territories, was ceded to the East India Company by the Nawab-Vazeer Shuja-ud-Daula under the treaty† of November 10, 1801. The British made Bithoor the headquarters of the Kanpur district in 1811, although the army remained at Kanpur. Before that year Bithoor was the headquarters of the pargana‡ of that name. It continued to be the headquarters of the district till 1819. Between 1811 and 1819 two markets were built and named as Collectorganj and Russellganj. The latter derived its name from Mr. Claude Russell, the Judge, who erected it in 1812. There are four other bazars known by the names of Raja Bhagmal, Biharigunj, Naubatgunj and Katra Bhagmal. The departure of the district headquarters, and with it of the judicial and the revenue courts to Kanpur in 1819, would have given a severe blow to the importance of the place but for the fact that near about the same time it became the seat of Peshwa Baji Rao who, living like a monarch, maintained a large retinue of dependants, sepoys and servants.

PART DURING THE 'MUTINY'.

Bithoor played an important part in 1857. Three well-known leaders of the insurgents, viz. Nana Saheb, Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb, belonged to this place. It was here that Nana Saheb was crowned *Peshwa* after the defeat of the British at Kanpur. A battle between the forces of the Nana and the British Government was also fought here. The town was stormed by English commanders more than once resulting in its almost total destruction. They also did everything possible to reduce§ the place to insignificance as a reprisal against Nana Saheb. These and other events of importance will be noticed at appropriate places in other chapters.

*Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of N. W. P., volume VI, page 216, foot-note.

†A reference to this treaty has been made in Chapter 18, Section A, dealing with Kanpur.

‡Bithoor has long lost its individuality as a separate pargana, having been gradually cut up and its villages transferred to other parganas. Its complete annihilation was effected after the mutiny when in 1860 it was divided between the parganas of Sheorajpur and Jajmau

§In 1860 Bithoor ceased to exist as a separate pargana.

PRESENT IMPORTANCE

The place is now important mainly as a centre of pilgrimage. For some years past it is, however, becoming popular with the residents of Kanpur who go there in large numbers for picnic, recreation, bathing or *sat-sang* on Sundays and other holidays and on important bathing days throughout the year. Some pious-minded people have also built ashrams of their own ; of these the most picturesque is the one built by Sri Shiva Narain Tandon a political and social worker and business-magnate of Kanpur. His Ashram stands in the midst of a beautifully laid-out garden on a high cliff of the Ganga adjoining the P. W. D. inspection house.

C. PESHWA'S TEMPLE AND TATYA TOPE'S MANSION

One of the wives of Peshwa Baji Rao, Saraswati Bai by name, was on her death cremated in Arazi Lashkar on the bank of the Ganga. On the spot where her mortal remains were consigned to the fire her loving husband erected a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and known as the temple of Sri Saraswateshwar after the name of the departed lady. The ashes of her body were buried underneath the temple according to traditional usage.

In front of the temple, the Peshwa also built a bathing ghat of strong stone masonry. The ghat is still intact and affords much convenience to the residents of the surrounding villages as well as to pilgrims in the month of Sawan, a month during which regular bathing in the Ganga is believed to be of special piety. As Sawan falls during the rainy season, the Ganga flows by the ghat although in winter and summer it recedes to a distance of one or two furlongs from the ghat. The importance of this ghat lies in the fact that it is situated at a place down-stream where there is no other *pucca* ghat.

The temple itself is built in strong brick masonry covered by a special kind of limestone plaster which gives a shining colour to the surface. It is said that in the not distant past, the polish on the walls was so bright that people used the wall as a looking glass. The temple stands on a square platform of stones which have been joined together with molten lead to give strength to the work. The floor inside the temple was paved with white and black marble of rare quality as can be seen from a few pieces still left on the base of the central door-way. The rest of the marble work was dismantled some time after the reconquest of Bithoor by the British during the "Mutiny".

As a reprisal against Nana Saheb, the British Government, on the re-establishment of their authority, were determined to remove from Bithoor all signs and places belonging to, or associated with, the name of Nana Saheb and his family. One of the actions so taken was the blowing up of the mansion of Baji Rao in which Nana Saheb had been living. The English commanders had also decided to blow up this temple, which along with the ghat, carried the name of the Peshwa, the temple being known as Peshwa's temple and the ghat as Maharaj* ghat.

The temple was, however, eventually saved by the magnanimity of a Muslim nobleman of Lucknow. He was one of those persons whose interests were inter-religional and who, like others, had been greatly impressed by the imposing structure of this magnificent temple. To the British authorities he put the proposition that if the only motive in destroying this place of worship was to erase the name of Nana Saheb and his family, then

*Reverential name of the Peshwa.

that object could be achieved by putting the temple to auction—a process by which the auction-purchaser would become the owner of the temple, and then his own name would be associated with it instead of the Peshwa's. The authorities accepted this proposal and the temple was purchased by this pious nobleman. The name of this broad-hearted dignitary, who made no distinction between a temple and a mosque, is known amongst the residents of Bithoor as the Nawab of Lucknow. His name is still taken with worshipful remembrance by the elderly people to whom this incident is known. This is but proper because the noble Nawab and his religion of Islam have rightly earned the praise and reverence of a grateful people.

This is the mystery of this temple. How nice it would be if the Government of independent India could turn it into a national monument ever to commemorate the name of this follower of Islam and of the doctrine of universal brother-hood preached by the holy Prophet. In the alternative, Government could constitute a Committee of devout persons, including Muslim gentlemen, for the maintenance of the temple and allot to it an annual grant from Government funds.

Mansion of Tatya Tope

Near the above temple there is a mansion of the famous warrior of 1857, Tatya Tope. The original structure was destroyed by the authorities after the "mutiny", and the present building was raised on the foundations of the old one. It is a kutchha house in which now dwells the nephew of the great General, Sri Narain Rao Tope, whom both the Government of India and the Uttar Pradesh Government are paying pensions in memory of the distinguished patriot. The house has a room called "RAM MANDIR" in which images of the time of Tatya Tope can still be seen. Sri Narain Rao has also in his possession a number of original pictures of Peshwa Baji Rao, Tatya Tope, and other notable persons of 1857. Tourists visiting Bithoor make it a point to go to this place to have a talk with Sri Narain Rao about his celebrated uncle.

D. OTHER THINGS OF INTEREST

THE GHATS.

Along the river bank, and for a considerable distance, there is a series of masonry ghats. These, together with the clusters of temples and dwelling houses, which exist on the bank, make a picturesque and imposing sight. Most of the ghats are, however, in a dilapidated condition. Only the Brahmavart Ghat, which is of great antiquity, is maintained in a state of good repair. The present Ghat was built by Raja Hindu Singh of Sanchedi. It is at this Ghat that the pilgrims take bath and worship the nail of the horse's shoe which is fixed in the middle of the stair-work and is surrounded by a small iron-railing.

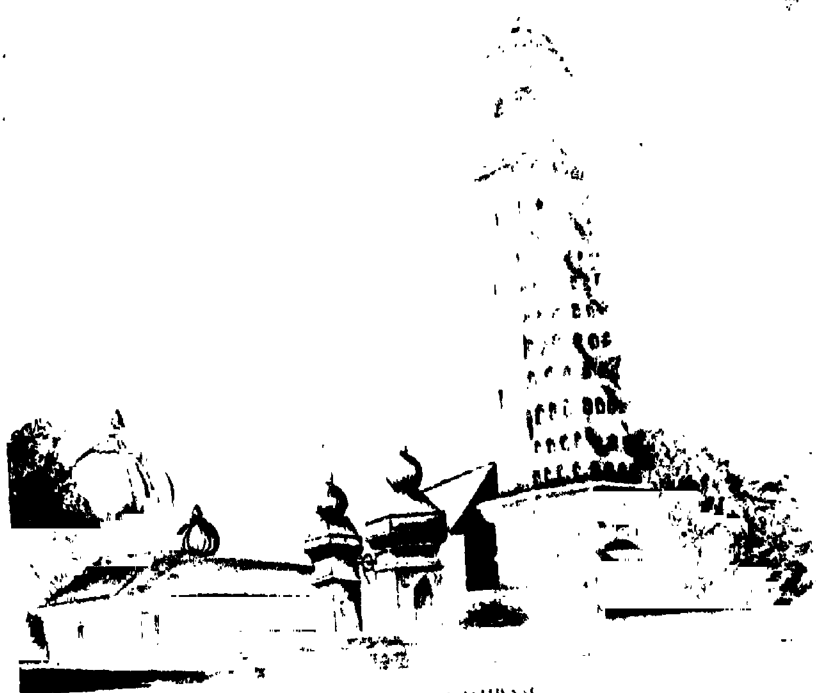
Adjoining the Brahmavart Ghat there is another ghat, known as the Pathhar Ghat, built in 1815 by Raja Tikait Rai, the celebrated Minister of King Ghaziuddin Hyder of Avadh. It is built in an imposing style with several chambers in front to serve as bathing rooms for women. Up above the ghat there is a fine temple of red sandstone dedicated to Lord Shiva. On the rear side are numerous verandahs and rooms meant for shop-keepers who in those days came from distant places on the occasion of the annual fairs, particularly the Poornamashi fair or the full-moon of Kartik. The ghat and the surrounding structures had fallen into disrepair ; but some years ago, a public subscription of Rs.4,500 was raised and the ghat and the structures were restored. Recently, the temple itself has been renovated and repaired by a grant made by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

There are eight other ancient ghats, widely separated from each other on the right bank



THE BRAHMAVARTA GHAT

It was at this place that Brahma performed the horse-sacrifice prior to propagating the human race in the world. A big nail embedded in one of the steps of the Ghat is pointed out as the nail of the shoe of the sacrificial horse. After taking bath at the Ghat devout people worship the nail by offerings of flower, fruit and coin.



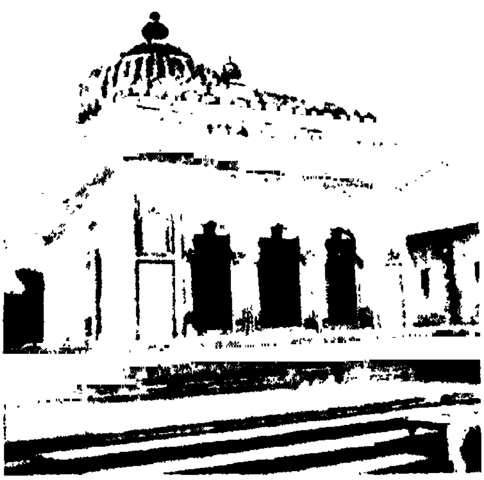
THE VALMIKI ASHRAM

The traditional place where the sage Valmiki had his hermitage during the Ramayana period. In those days the Ganga flowed by it, but now the deep stream has receded towards the east. The place was renovated by Peshwa Baji Rao, and recently some religious-minded people have reconstructed some other structures within the campus.



MOSQUE OF ALMAS ALI

In its time this was an imposing building having been constructed by Almas Ali Khan, the local Governor. It stands at a commanding place on the bank of the Ganga near Lakshman Ghat. It is now in a dilapidated condition, sharing the common fate of many temples and buildings which have been reduced to ruins by neglect in ill-fated Bithoor after the Mutiny.



PESHWA'S TEMPLE

This temple of Saraswateshwar Mahadeva is popularly known as the Peshwa's temple. It was built by Peshwa Baji Rao in memory of his wife, Saraswati Bai, who was cremated on this spot. This magnificent temple, with a massive Moghul style dome, stands on the bank of the Ganga with a fine bathing ghat below. The temple would have been in ruins but for the magnanimity of a nobleman locally known as *Lucknow ke Nawab* who used his good offices with the British for sparing this place of worship.

of the Ganga. These are known as *tirthas* and are thus situated :

(1) Gyan Tirth, near the temple of Valmiki. Here the celebrated sage received enlightenment.

(2) Janki Tirth, on the northern side of Brahmeshwar Ghat.

(3) Lakshman Tirth is further on in the same direction.

(4) Dhruva Tirth is below the Dhruva fort still further towards the north.

(5) Shuka Tirth is further up the river near Rishikul in old Bithoor.

(6) Ram Tirth is still up the river near the place known as Khanderao after the name of Mahatma Khanderao.

(7) Dashashwamedh Tirth, which is yet further up the river.

(8) Gocharan Tirth is in Patakapur, a suburb of Bithoor.

Of these eight *tirthas* or ghats only two namely, Janki Tirth and Lakshman Tirth are in existence, but their masonry work is in a dilapidated condition. The others are mounds of clay with no visible trace of brick-work. Their location is pointed out by local pandas and elderly people.

OTHER PLACES

There is a P. W. D. inspection house and two schools, one for boys, the other for girls. The girls school was provided with a new building in 1957. A Sanskrit Pathshala also functions and is known after the name of Janki Bai, a lady of the Subedar family. A Training-*cum*-Production Centre has recently been opened providing training in carpentry, black-smithy, tailoring and leather-working.

The town has a good dispensary maintained by the District Board. The old dispensary was reconstructed in 1956 with the aid of a donation from Seth Madan Lal of Kanpur who has an ashram here and who also supervised the work of construction. An indoor patients' ward, with accommodation for beds has also been added. A maternity and child-welfare centre constructed in 1957-58—again with the help of a donation from Seth Madan Lal—completes the health-arrangements of the town.

There is no paucity of dharmashalas in Bithoor. Several of them are near the Railway Station which is at a distance of about one mile from the main habitations (now mostly of local pandas) in the vicinity of the principal bathing centre at Brahmeshwar Ghat. Apart from dharmashalas, there are several ashrams where devout persons can put up.

CALIGRAPHY AND SWEET-MEATS

Bithoor was a flourishing town in the time of Peshwa Baji Rao, as prosperous as it had been in the earlier period. Until the turn of the last century it was famous for its caligraphy in Devanagari character—it was full of *pandits* renowned for this art.* It was also famous for its sweet-meats. The *peras* (पेड़ा) of Bithoor were so well renowned that they were prized even at such distant places as Bombay. But with the decline in the importance of Bithoor since the "mutiny" this trade has been ruined—only a few elderly people know the names of the celebrated sweet-meat makers of old whose descendants are now plying other less remunerative trades.

LEGEND ABOUT SHIFTING OF DEEP STREAM

At the time when Peshwa Baji Rao came to settle in Bithoor, the deep stream of the Ganga was flowing, as now, below the Brahmeshwar Ghat and below other ancient and medieval ghats, which ran for several miles to the north of the Brahmeshwar Ghat. Baji Rao himself had built a ghat known

*Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of N. W. P., volume VI, page 217.

as the Peshwa Ghat. Some time after Baji Rao's arrival the current shifted several miles to the east and the deep stream was flowing below Pariyar which lies in the Unnao district on the left bank of the river. To enable the Peshwa and his family to go for bathing in the Ganga a passage used to be constructed each year after the rains for them to go to the river for bath and worship. The Peshwa himself, his women-folk and the immediate members of his family went on palanquins. Nevertheless, to ward them off from the gaze of the public the passage used to be screened by *tatties*—these had to be removed in the rainy season on account of the flood water.

The shifting of the current to the Pariyar side was then attributed by local people to the wrath of the Ganga caused by the fact that the elephants, horses and cattle of the Peshwa were contaminating the holy water. Old people of Bithoor and the neighbouring villages still repeat this tale to which they purport to give credence by the fact that after the end of the Peshwa and his settlement the Ganga came back to the original position below the Brahmeshwar Ghat.*

THE SUBEDAR FAMILY OF BITHOOR

Ram Chandra Pant, the Subedar or manager of Peshwa Baji Rao at Bithoor, was the founder of this family. He had great influence on the Peshwa. After the deaths of the Peshwa and of Ram Chandra Pant, Narain Rao, the Subedar's son, and Nana Saheb became on terms of ill-will against each other. Government officers at Kanpur took advantage of this to wean Narain Rao to their side. In the inevitable circumstances of the situation, Subedar Narain Rao used his influence with the Government to restrain them from completely destroying the town of Bithoor after British authority had been re-established. His successors, influential people as they were, held a place of great importance in the town of Bithoor and in the counsels of the Government.

An account of this family, whose members are now numerous, appears in Chapter 30, Section B.

तपस्विनां यत्र तपोवनानि,
रम्याण्यनेकानि च काननानि ;
दिव्यौषधिर्जीवनदोऽपि वायुः,
सराजते भारतवर्ष–देशः ।

*This account has been corroborated by Sri Brij Bahadur (aged about 80 years), retired Qanungo, and an old resident of village Ramel near Bithoor. His father was for some time in the employ of Peshwa Baji Rao.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BAJI RAO IN EXILE AT BITHOOR.

HIS RETINUE.

THE SHANIWAR BARA MANSION.

BAJI RAO'S JAGIR.

RAJA SHIVA PRASAD MEETS THE EX-PESHWA.

LEGENDS ABOUT HIM.

HIS DEATH.

CHARACTER OF BAJI RAO.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind,
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp,
As a friend's remembered not."

—SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It.*

HIS RETINUE

IT WAS to Bithoor then that the melancholy Peshwa made his long and tedious journey. He was accompanied by his wives and the immediate members of his family. Also with him was a long retinue of near relations, faithful sardars and personal servants who, during the Peshwa's rule, were dependent on his bounty and who had now no source of livelihood to look to at Poona. On the disbandment of the Maratha army a large mass of professional soldiers also lost their only source of earning; many of them, who expressed a desire to follow the man who had just ceased to be their master, were taken in that sorrowful company. Such was the spectacle of an uprooted sovereign accompanied by his uprooted adherents, leaving with heavy hearts the hearths and homes of their ancestors and making their tiresome way to a distant land to pass the rest of their days in exile.

Baji Rao had surrendered to General Malcolm on June 3, 1818. He crossed the Narbada on June 12 and thereupon his military following was disbanded. He proceeded to the north with a retinue of 600 horsemen and 200 footmen with Ramchandra Pant Subedar and Baloba Salkade and other dependents. Baji Rao had requested that Lt. Low be permitted to accompany him and this was granted. Time was taken in settling the place of his retirement. He slowly travelled *via* Ajmer and spent several

months at Mathura. The British had suggested that he could settle at Monghyr or Gorakhpur ; the religious Peshwa showed preference for Varanasi. The final choice fell on Bithoor where he arrived in February, 1819, to die in January 1851, after a long but care-free exile of 32 years.*

THE SHANIWAR BARA MANSION

The Peshwa built a large mansion here right on the bank of the Ganga and at a stone's throw from the place where the railway station was built afterwards. The building was a two-storied one facing the north, with the river flowing on its east. Situated on a high cliff of the river it commanded an imposing view. Adjacent to the main building was constructed a *pucca* bathing ghat and a large thakurdwara in which images of Rama, Lakshman and Seeta were installed—this was a private place of worship for the Peshwa and his family.

The mansion itself was a spacious one with two large courtyards with verandahs all round them, the inner one being reserved entirely for women-folk. The rooms were numerous and the thick walls that surrounded them were hollow at many places on account of the secret chambers constructed within them. These chambers were meant primarily for storing valuables, but at times of commotion served also as a hiding place for the ladies and the children, the sick and the infirm. The whole building was decorated in grand style with large mirrors, costly chandeliers and pieces of heavy furniture after the fashion of those days.

But the ex-monarch found no comfort in this magnificent mansion. He complained that it was too small for his needs ; that he must have a much bigger house And he did have it, for at another site covering several acres a palatial building, befitting the former ruler of a large kingdom, was soon erected. This site was at some distance from the river bank, but in the proximity of the dwelling houses, unlike the former mansion which was situated in comparatively secluded surroundings in Arazi Lashkar.

This mansion was named by Baji Rao as Shaniwar Bara (शनिवार बाड़ा)† after the name of Shaniwar Palace of the Peshwas at Poona. The house was a grand structure. It had extensive halls decorated with carpets and tapestries. There were in it beautifully carved mirrors, carved ivory works, valuable china. Magnificent chandeliers lent further ornament to the palace. Portraits of Baji Rao's ancestors, hung in the main hall and at other prominent places added dignity to the whole atmosphere of this splendorous habitation.

An enclosure wall surrounded the vast area within which were dug seven masonry wells of enormous size and great depth. A big temple added to the beauty of the place. The whole thing, which was popularly known as the Peshwa's Bara, was a grand spectacle in the midst of picturesque surroundings with temples having high minarets and big domes with natural scenery besides. To all this the stately-flowing Ganga lent a charm of its own.

All that now remains of this once famous Bara are the wells which, though in a state of decay, still give some idea of the grandeur of the place. The whole edifice with the appurtenant buildings was razed to the ground by the British on the re-occupation of Kánpur. Even the temple of God was not spared. After the gradual removal of the debris, the land was divided into plots which were leased out to farmers for cultivation. But for the wells and the ruins of a *baradari*, no sign remains of the palace. The wells were preserved, firstly in the hope of finding

*Sardesai, volume III, page 500.

†The people of Maharashtra are fond of naming houses, roads and mohallas after the names of the days of the week. In Poona, we still find areas carrying the names of the days of the week.

treasure in them (which in fact was found in a large quantity) and, secondly for providing irrigation to the fields.

The place is now recognized by the memorial to Nana Saheb which was erected after Independence on a part of the premises. A description of this appears in Chapter 42, Section F.

After the Peshwa had shifted to this new dwelling, his Subedar requested that the vacated house be given to him for his own residense. The request was no sooner made than granted and the Subedar, by name Ram Chandra, lost no time in occupying it. This building suffered no damage at the hands of the British because the Subedar Narain Rao, his son, had not joined in the uprising for various reasons of his own. One of these was that after the death of Baji Rao serious personal differences had arisen between Narain Rao and the Nana as a result of which the former had probably suffered some disgrace at the hands of the new master.

Baji Rao also maintained a train of elephants, camels and horses. The elephants had costly *howdas* inlaid with gold and silver. Their *jhuls* were of velvet richly embroidered in gold. The horses and camels were similarly ornamented.

BAJI RAO'S JAGIR

The British Government granted to Baji Rao a jagir in Bithoor for the residence of himself and his followers. The grant was made subject to the pleasure of Government, that is to say it could be resumed if the Government so wished.

This jagir was later excluded from the jurisdiction of the civil and criminal courts of the Company. The residents living within the jagir were thus not subject to the civil and criminal law in force in British India—they were made subject to the administration of the Peshwa in civil as well as criminal matters, subject to the control of the Governor-General in Council.

It was further provided that every person residing within the limits of the jagir was to be regarded an adherent or retainer of Baji Rao. If a question arose as to the right of jurisdiction over a person claiming to be considered such an adherent or retainer or not to be so considered, the question was to be finally and conclusively decided by the British Commissioner with Baji Rao. This immunity extended only to crimes and offences committed by the residents of the jagir within the jagir itself—for any crimes committed outside it, anywhere in British territory, the offenders were subject to British law and courts. Similarly, Indian British subjects committing offences punishable under certain Regulations within the limits of the jagir were not exempt from the jurisdiction of the Company's courts.

Provision was also made regarding the channel of communication with Baji Rao. Any references or applications to him from the officers of Government on matters concerning their public duties were to be transmitted through the Company's Commissioner with Baji Rao. Similarly, Baji Rao's answer was to be sent to the officer making the reference through the same channel.*

The British Government ceased to address Baji Rao as *Peshwa*; they also omitted the honorific *Pant Pradhan*† from his style. He was simply addressed as Maharaja Baji Rao Bahadur. Baji Rao had reason to feel sore on this change in his title and style.

*Regulation I of 1832.

†This expression means *Prime Minister* and was suffixed to the name of all ruling Peshwas—it appears in all treaties and engagements and formal documents. The Peshwas attached special value to it.

RAJA SHIVA PRASAD MEETS THE PESHWA

Raja Shiva Prasad, C.S.I.,‡ of Varanasi has, in his autobiography entitled *Sawan-i-Umri*, given an interesting account of his visit to Peshwa Baji Rao at Bithoor. The Raja Saheb was on his way from Delhi to Varanasi on the *palki dak* and reaching Kanpur he felt an irresistible desire to meet the Peshwa. It was then known to every one, says Raja Shiva Prasad, that at one time Baji Rao was the master of three lac horsemen and that the four Maharajas—Bhonsla of Nagpur, Gaekwad of Baroda, Holkar of Indore and Scindhia of Gwalior—were like the four pillars of his throne. So, Raja Shiva Prasad proceeded to Bithoor and there with the help of a *panda* was taken to the residence of the Peshwa's Diwan who lived close to the Peshwa's mansion. The Diwan was then busy worshipping Lord Shiva with a basketful of flowers, but he quickly arranged an interview. The Raja Saheb was wearing trousers, but as none could present himself before the august presence of the ex-monarch with that garment on, the Diwan provided him with a dhoti (loin cloth). On reaching before the Peshwa, he was told to take his seat on a *takht*, the Peshwa himself being seated on a swing (jhoola), fastened with silken cords, and on which a one-foot thick gadda was spread. The swing was so situated that it was safe from the touch of any one and was also at a distance from the visitor. What conversation took place between the two has not been recorded by the Raja Saheb, but he was impressed by the sight of some twenty-five chiming clocks which decorated the walls. These were very valuable pieces and had been, from time to time, presented to Baji Rao by British officers. But they were more for decoration than for seeing the time, because the Peshwa had a separate functionary whose duty it was to keep the time and to announce it at regular intervals.

LEGENDS ABOUT THE PESHWA

In the *thakurdwara* belonging to the old Dubey family of Bithoor, tourists go to see an image of God Ganapati. The image is of exquisite beauty and is carved on a piece of flawless white marble of moderate size. The image originally belonged to Peshwa Baji Rao and was installed in his private temple. In the course of the sack of the Peshwa's Palace following the defeat of Nana Saheb, the valuables were seized by the British, and as for the temple it was blown up along with the palace. But this beautiful image escaped unscathed and was taken charge of by the present owners. Since then it is being treated as a sort of 'protected' image by the Dubey family who offer daily worship to it along with the main deities in the *thakurdwara*.

Baji Rao was very fond of this image and it is said that in the course of its worship he used to make a daily offering of a gold mohar at the feet of the deity.

An old Maharashtra lady of Bithoor has informed the author that Baji Rao was now and then harassed by the ghost of Peshwa Narayan Rao who had been assassinated at Poona, and in which shameful deed Baji Rao's father, Raghunath Rao, had a hand. The lady said that the murdered Narayan Rao had become a *brahma-rakshash* who used to trouble Raghunath Rao while he lived. On the latter's death the ghost used to haunt Baji Rao when at Poona and whom he followed to Bithoor. The ghost used to

‡Raja Shiva Prasad belonged to a family which was connected with the well-known Jagat Seth of Murshidabad. A member of this family, by name Seth Dal Chand, on incurring the displeasure of the Nawab of Murshidabad, fled to Varanasi and settled there under the protection of the British. Raja Shiva Prasad, born in 1823, was the great grandson of Seth Dal Chand. For many years he served as an inspector of schools and was, in 1883, appointed a Member of the Viceroy's Council. He was a writer of repute and devoted himself to the popularization of Hindustani. He received from the British Government the hereditary title of Raja and the decoration of the Companion of the Star of India. His death occurred in 1895—Page 125 of the Manual of Titles, Uttar Pradesh.

appear only when Baji Rao was alone, and this has been given as the reason for Baji Rao's contracting marriages even in old age.* In order to propitiate this ghost of his cousin brother, Baji Rao had set apart one room in his mansion in which were kept, every night, all items of cooked food and the things needed for a wash-up, such as a bucket of water, a *dhoti*, a towel. The room was then locked. On opening the room in the morning it used to be found in such a state as to lead to the inference that some one had taken a bath and partaken of the food.

The author did not first take the old lady seriously. Later, he was surprised to find that an account contained in the Poona Gazetteer lends strong support to what the lady had stated. It is there recorded that Baji Rao "claimed great holiness and was most careful to keep all religious rules and ceremonies. Apparently to lay the ghost of Narayan Rao Peshwa, whom his parents had murdered and who seems to have haunted him, Baji Rao planted several hundred thousand trees about Poona, gave largesses to Brahmans and religious establishments, and was particularly generous to Vithoba's temple at Pandharpore. It was probably Narayan Rao's ghost that so often took him to Pandharpore."†

The Peshwa's pension used to be disbursed in instalments at Bithoor. On one occasion Baji Rao was on the bank of the Ganga performing oblations and making offerings to the sacred river. At that time arrived at the Peshwa's palace the officials of Government with an instalment of the pension. On being told where the Peshwa was, they hastened to the river bank with the bags of coin laden in carts. Approaching him, they said that his pension had come. The Peshwa, thereupon, signed the acquittance and directed his men to take the money. And he also directed them to consign it to the holy waters—saying that the money, having come to the bank of the Ganga, could not be taken back to his palace—the money had become part of the offering, and so ought to be offered to Mother Ganga. And the order was carried out without demur. Such was the story told to the author by an old resident of Bithoor whose ancestor was in the service of the Peshwa. This incident, if true, is not surprising, because though Baji Rao had lost his kingdom he had not lost the princely heart within the physical frame which for 22 years had sat on the masnad of Poona.

HIS DEATH

The ex-ruler devoted himself to pious pursuits. This suited his religious temperament which he had inherited from the earlier Peshwas and a long line of orthodox Brahmans of the Maharashtra school. In any case he had nothing else to do. However that may be, his devotion to the worship of God enabled him to forget his former glory and power. He was now left with no outward regret or compunction for the loss of his throne or the liquidation of the great Maratha State of Shivaji's creation.

Baji Rao's predecessors had short lives except the first Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath who lived to the age of 60. Baji Rao I, the second Peshwa, lived only for 40 years, the third Peshwa Balaji Rao faired no better, dying at the same age. The fourth Peshwa Madhav Rao's illustrious life was cut short at 27 years. Narayan Rao, the fifth Peshwa, was only 18 at the time of his assassination, and Madhav Rao II jumped down to die when still a boy of 21. The eventful life of Baji Rao's own father (Raghoba) came to a close at 49 years. But Baji Rao himself lived to

*Azimullah's Diary states that Baji Rao had contracted eleven marriages—six when he was Peshwa at Poona and five at Bithoor.

†Bombay Gazetteer, Poona Volume, Part II, page 293 and foot-note. Pandharpore is famous for the temple of Sri Vithhalji.

a ripe old age of 76. This was probably because his ample pension made him carefree and enabled him to live a life of ease.

In the third week of January, 1851, the Maharaja was taken seriously ill, and died on January 28. On the same day his funeral obsequies were performed by Nana Saheb. This fact had been reported by Colonel Manson in a letter to Government, dated January 31, 1851, in which he added "perfect order and tranquillity had been kept since the Maharaja's death".

The death of Baji Rao caused a gloom not only in Bithoor, but outside also particularly in Sangli, Kolhapur, Baroda, Satara, Nagpur, Indore, Gwalior, Jhansi and Avadh. Tatya Tope was so much grief-stricken that he jumped into the Ganga to commit suicide. He was rescued with great difficulty and could recover himself only after a month.

The funeral rites of Baji Rao were performed by Nana Saheb with great show, and thousands of Brahmans were fed.*

The Peshwas were deeply religious persons, fond of Vedic ceremonies and Shastric rituals. Stupendous ceremonies in conformity with Brahamanical traditions were performed on the death of a Peshwa and costly gifts were given to Brahmans. These gifts included five principal items, namely elephants, horses, gold, jewels and land, and went by the name of *mahadans*. Agreeably to this custom, the funeral obsequies of Baji Rao were performed much on the same scale as in the case of his predecessors for Nana Saheb spared no expense in giving colour and impression to the death rites of his adoptive father whom he held in great reverence. But when it came to the question of *land* it was found that the family did not possess even a *biswa* of land anywhere. The departed Peshwa had, of course, been assigned lands in Bithoor by the British Government, but in them Nana Saheb had only a life interest which meant that he could not give them away. One Sardar Raghunath Rao Vinchurkar,† a beneficiary of the House of Peshwas, being at Bithoor at the time, was pained to notice that the heir to the ex-monarch had no land to donate on the occasion. In his loyalty to the family he suggested that as all the other *mahadans* had been performed, the gift of land should not be omitted, adding that out of his fifty-two villages in the South the Nana should present some land to the Brahmans to complete the ceremony. He argued that these lands of his jagir and inam really belonged to the Peshwa and so there should be no hesitation in accepting the offer. The Nana, being greatly touched by the Sardar's deep devotion to his family, could not restrain his emotion and tears gushed forth from his eyes.‡

CHARACTER OF BAJI RAO

At Bithoor, Baji Rao lived a lotus-eater's life in the midst of faithful relations, sardars and personal servants. Here at Bithoor, he found full play for his religious practices of which he had been fond like the other Peshwas. His time was mostly spent in the performance of religious rites on a grand scale with the aid of priests adept in the line. He also undertook pilgrimages to Varanasi, Prayag and Gaya.

*Azimullah Khan's Diary.

†He belonged to the family of Vithhal Narsinh, the Chief of Vinchur, who was one of the few Maratha sardars who remained constantly loyal to the Peshwa. He refused to desert Baji Rao to the last and take advantage of the British offers and was utterly ruined in consequence. He was eventually granted a jagir by the British Government as a result of the recommendation of Governor Elphinstone of Bombay who took pity on his case. He urged on Elphinstone the argument that his conduct in remaining loyal to his master did not deserve censure, but recognition. The thoughtful Englishman readily accepted this contention—Sardesai, Vol. III, page 508.

‡*Itihas Sangraha, Aitihasik Sphuta Lekh*, Part III, page 26.

When occupying the Peshwa's gaddi at Poona, Baji Rao was not behind his predecessors in the practice of patronage to men of learning. "Learned men from all parts of India were attracted to Poona and Baji Rao spent some four lakhs of rupees among them in charities. That munificence brought to Poona a reputation as a centre of learning which has survived to our own times.†

Now at Bithoor, Baji Rao maintained this practice and Bithoor soon became a place of pilgrimage for scholars well-read in ancient learning and for priests adept in the art of performing religious ceremonies All this gave an atmosphere of great piety to the town of Bithoor. For this reason, coupled with the Peshwa's residence there, Bithoor became renowned throughout the country.

Baji Rao himself was a man of learning, and possessed the art of eloquence in which he excelled. He also carried with him the other accomplishments associated with the high Brahmanical house of Maharashtra to which the Peshwa belonged. These held him out as an enlightened and highly cultured personality.

Though lacking in courage, Baji Rao possessed handsome features and a personality of his own. It was this lack of courage, above all things, which failed him at the critical moment of his reign when he shirked from taking a bold and final decision by leaving the place of action, to the dismay of his generals and ministers. But for this weakness, Baji Rao would not have met the fate he did. He was in other respects a persevering personality. As observed by Elphinstone, if Baji Rao "were less deficient in courage. he would be ambitious, impervious, inflexible and persevering." Of his perseverence, we have seen its proof in the last preceding chapter, when for several months he put up with physical and mental sufferings of every description, flying from place to place but refusing to surrender.

क्रियासु युक्तैर्नृप चारचक्षुषो
न वञ्चनीयाः प्रभवोऽनुजीविभिः,
अतोऽर्हसि क्षन्तुमसाधु साधु वा
हितं मनोहारि च दुर्लभं वचः।

—Bharavi. *Kiratarjuniyam*, 1–4.

†J. R. Sharma, page 294.

CHAPTER NINE

PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE OF NANA SAHEB

A. BIRTH AND ADOPTION.

B. UP-BRINGING AND CHARACTER.

- PERSONAL APPEARANCE.
- ATTAINMENTS AND CHARACTER.
- HIS FONDNESS FOR ENTERTAINING GUESTS.
- OTHER HOBBIES.

C. THIS PICTURE AND THAT.

A. BIRTH AND ADOPTION

MAHADEV or MADHO NARAIN RAO=GANGA BAI

Bala Bhatt or Baba Bhatt	GOVIND DHONDU PANT (NANA SAHEB)	Gangadhar Rao or Bala Rao (Bala Saheb)	Mathura Bai (daughter)	Shyama Bai (daughter)

THE FULL name of Nana Saheb was NANA GOVIND DHONDU PANT. He came of a Maharashtra family of the South, and it is customary in these families to give the pet name of 'Nana' (which in Marathi means 'small')* to children who are held in special affection. Nana Saheb was an object of particular affection to Peshwa Baji Rao who had taken him as his adopted son. And he then began to be known as NANA SAHEB, a name which has become famous in modern Indian history.

Nana Saheb was born in village Venu in Taluka Nastrapur in Maharashtra. This village is situated in a valley of the Matheran hills. The exact year of his birth is doubtful, but it is one or the other of the years 1822, 1823 or 1824. According to the records of the Government of the North Western Provinces Nana Saheb's age in 1858, was 36 years, which would mean that he was born in 1822. At the same time it is also on record that it was at the age of three years that he was adopted by Peshwa Baji Rao at Bithoor. As the adoption took place in 1827, his date of birth would come to 1824. As shown in the geneological table above, Nana Saheb was the second amongst three brothers and two sisters.

Peshwa Baji Rao II and Nana Saheb's father, Madho Narain, were brothers in *gotra*. In 1818 Peshwa Baji Rao, on being dis-possessed of his kingdom, proceeded to live in Bithoor

*The word *Nana* is said to be a corruption of the Hindustani word *nanhey* (नन्हे) meaning small (in age). As Nana Saheb was the younger son in the family (the eldest being Bala or Baba Bhatt), he was affectionately called *Nana*. And on becoming a prince on adoption the word *Saheb* was added to show respect. Thus the name NANA SAHEB is said to have been evolved.

as a pensioner of the East India Company. On Peshwa Baji Rao's departure from Poona, the parents of Nana Saheb found themselves in financial difficulties : so after some time they followed the Peshwa to Bithoor and lived there under his patronage.

Adoption by Baji Rao

Peshwa Baji Rao was greatly attached to Nana Saheb and, having no male issue of his own body, took him as an adopted son. It was in this way that Nana Saheb got into the family of the Peshwa. His younger brother Bala Saheb is also said to have been taken in adoption* by Baji Rao. It is, however, doubtful whether this adoption was a regular and formal one because under the Hindu law adoption is not permissible if a person has a male issue living, nor can he adopt another son if one previously adopted be living. The reason is that in the eyes of law a single son is sufficient for the continuance of the line—and it is this object on which the Hindu doctrine of adoption is based. That is also the reason why simultaneous adoption of two sons is not legally permissible. But whatever may have been the actual position, Nana Saheb being the elder son, was naturally treated by Baji Rao as his principal and prime representative in respect of personal property and, in conformity with the rule of primogeniture, as the successor to his title and privileges as an ex-ruler.

On adoption, the legal association of Nana Saheb with his natural father and his family came to an end ; in law he ceased to be the son of his natural father, and became a son of the Peshwa, acquiring all the attributes, legal as well as religious, of a natural born son. So, again in the eyes of law, he would trace his ancestry to Balaji Vishwanath, the first Peshwa of Poona. His geneological table would then be as follows :

Geneology of Nana Saheb

Balaji Vishwanath .. *1st Peshwa* (Died 1720)
|
Baji Rao I .. .. *2nd Peshwa* (Died 1740)
|
Raghunath Rao or Raghoba (Also called Raghoba Dada) .. .. *6th Peshwa.*†
|
Maina Bai, Tai Bai and Saraswati Bai = Baji Rao II .. .. *9th Peshwa.*‡ (Died 1851).
|
- Kundoo Bai (daughter)
- Kusuma Bai or Baya Bai (daughter)
- DHONDU PANT or *Nana Saheb* (adopted son)
- Raghunath Rao or Pandoo Rang Rao (*said* to be adopted son)
  - Rao Saheb
- Gangadhar Rao or Bala Saheb (*said* to be adopted son)

*In his will Baji Rao has described Bala Saheb as his adopted son. Similarly, he has described Pandoo Rang Rao (Raghunath Rao) as his adopted son ; the latter died leaving a son, commonly known as Rao Saheb. But they could not legally be his adopted sons along with Nana Saheb although he appears to have treated them as his sons. (There is a confusion of names in the will.)

†The 3rd Peshwa was Balaji Rao (elder brother of Raghoba) and the 4th and the 5th Peshwas were in turn his elder and younger sons, Madhav Rao Ballal and Narain Rao, respectively. On the assassination of Narain Rao, Raghoba declared himself as the 6th Peshwa though his claim was disputed by the Ministers of the Poona Darbar.

‡The 7th Peshwa was Madhava Rao Narain, the posthumous son of Narain Rao, the 5th Peshwa. He was born after Raghoba had, following the assassination of Narain Rao, declared himself Peshwa. The 8th Peshwa was Chimnaji Appa, younger brother of Baji Rao II. *He was on the gaddi for a few months only.*

B. UP-BRINGING AND CHARACTER

Though not born 'with a silver spoon in his mouth', Nana Saheb was brought up in most luxurious surroundings as the son of a former ruler of a large territory in India. Baji Rao's pension of eight lakhs a year, coupled with the wealth which he had brought from Poona, enabled him to live like a king with a large number of personal servants and the usual complement of courtiers. There were then the elephants and horses and cows and cattle, besides an ornamental army. As the heir-apparent of the Peshwa, Nana Saheb had all attention bestowed on him and, like the Indian princes of the time, he made full use of the comforts and enjoyments with which he was surrounded.

Nana Saheb had amongst his play-mates, Manu Bai, a girl of extraordinary parts, who later became the celebrated Rani of Jhansi. She too was said to have been adopted by Baji Rao. but this could not have been possible either under the Hindu law, or under the Vedic rules, both of which recognize only the institution of *sonship* and not also the institution of 'daughtership'. The reason is not far to seek. A daughter cannot propagate the line of her father—she is married into another family and propagates the line of that family, and not of the family of her birth. Another reason why adoption of girls is not permitted or recognized is that under the Shastras it is only a *son* (and not also a daughter) who can perform the funeral obsequies of his father and propitiate his soul and the souls of his deceased ancestors by periodical offerings of water and sesamum during the year. So from the religious point of view the adoption of a girl can serve no purpose, and hence such adoption has no meaning.

Accordingly, neither the Hindu law nor the Hindu religion permits or recognizes the adoption of a girl. It is of course another matter for a person to treat a girl *as* his daughter or to bring her up as such, but this will not create in the girl the legal status of a daughter ; consequently she will have no claim whatever in the property of the person who treats her as his daughter. The case of an adopted son is different—he acquires, immediately on adoption, the legal status of the son of the adoptive father and becomes entitled to succeed to his property in the same way as a natural-born son. Further, he does not lose any of the attributes of sonship on a son being born of the body of his adoptive father—in other words the adopted son is in law a natural-born son and continues so for ever.* In point of seniority too, the adopted son shall be treated as elder than the subsequently born natural son. Likewise, adoption is not permissible for a person having a natural-born son surviving.

There is no definite information about the marriage of Nana Saheb. According to the custom in the Peshwa's family as well as the general custom in those days, he must have been married at an early age and this would have been in the life-time of Maharaja Baji Rao. In the Diary of Azimullah Khan, however, it is recorded that Nana Saheb was married, not much long before the Mutiny, to a cousin of the Chief of Sangli and that the ceremony had been performed in grand style. This means that the wife of his earlier marriage had died and that this was his second marriage.

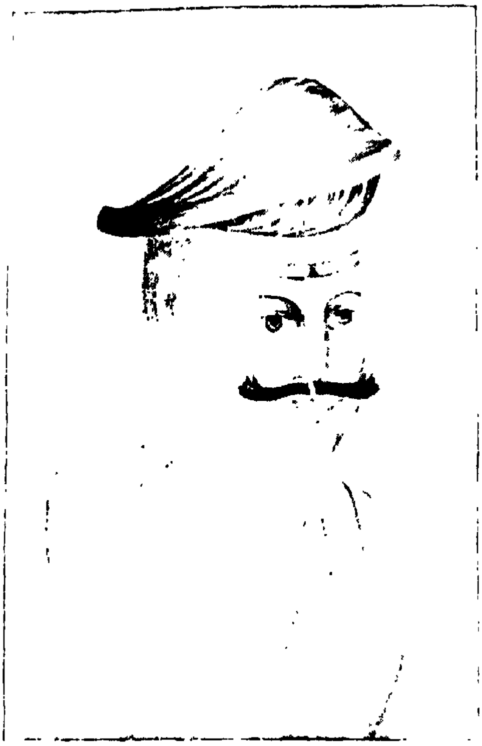
The drawing rooms of the Nana's palace were decorated with mirrors and chandeliers imported from Birmingham. Also, a vast store of gold and silver plate was at his service on all occasions. He had an

*This rule about non-recognition of adoption of girls applies also to the statement made in certain Government records (e.g. Proceedings of the N. W. P. Government in the Political Department for the month of June 1864) that the two sisters of Nana Saheb had also been adopted by Baji Rao.



NANA SAHEB

This is the picture which appears in Sri V. D. Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*



NANA SAHEB

The original of this picture is with Sri Narain Rao Tope, nephew of Tatya Tope, residing at Bithoor. It is said that when the family of Tatya Tope was arrested at Gwalior this portrait and some others were secreted with Sri Raghunath Deva, a prominent saint of Gwalior. After the family of Tatya Tope had, with the permission of Government, settled down at Bithoor, this and other pictures came into the possession of Sri Narain Rao's father.



NANA SAHEB

This portrait closely resembles the accepted picture of Nana Saheb. It appears to have been made from a different angle by artist Vilayat Ali. It was in the possession of Sri Babu Lal Khattri of Kalpi. It was published in *Vishal Bharat* of March 1929.

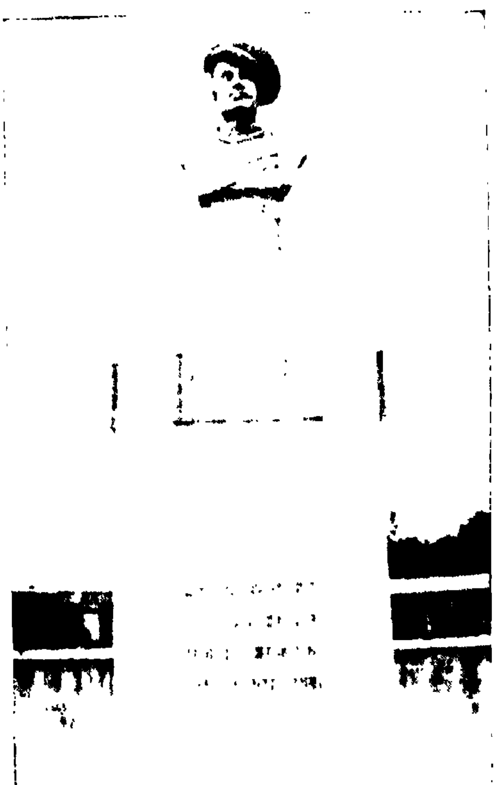


NANA SAHEB

This picture was published as the picture of Nana Saheb in the *London Times* of those days. It was stated to have been drawn by Mr. Todd the reader to Nana Saheb. But from the head dress it appears to be the portrait of a Nepalese prince, possibly Rana Jung Bahadur, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal at the time of the Indian rebellion.

NANA SAHEB

This picture has been published by the Chitrashala Press, Poona. It appears in several old books.





NANA SAHEB

This is the memorial statue of Nana Saheb erected by the Uttar Pradesh Government at Bithoor. A brief description of the memorial and the inscription on the pedestal of the statue may be seen in Chapter 42 (Last Days of Nana Saheb), at page 169.

enormous stock of jewellery and costly Kashmiri shawls.

Nana Saheb had a large retinue of several hundreds, each receiving from him a salary of Rs.4 a month and an annual supply of clothes. Besides, they were provided with swords, lances and match-locks. A part of this retinue was provided with horses.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

In the 'descriptive roll'* of Nana Saheb, in the possession of the then Government of the North-Western Provinces, he was described as a person of fair complexion, five feet eight inches in height with stout build and a powerful appearance. His face was mentioned as being flat and round with a well-shaped straight nose, large round eyes, regular teeth, black hair, a hairy breast, and ring-marks on ears on which, before his disappearance on the British reconquest of the country, he used to wear a pair of gold rings in the Maharashtrian style. The roll further described him as having the features of the Maratha strongly depicted in his facial expression and as having a lancet mark on one of his legs. It ended with the remark that by having grown a beard since his disappearance he presented a Mohammadan-like appearance and that a servant with a cut ear never left his side.

In the Diary of Azimullah Khan, Nana Saheb has been described as a very handsome person many times more handsome than Azimullah Khan himself who was reputed for his charming features.

An Englishman who had observed him closely on many occasions says that, at the time he saw him, he was really about twenty-eight years of age, but he looked forty. "His face was round ; his eyes, restless like those of a tiger, were piercing and of great lustre ; his complexion was like that of any Spaniard ; his conversation was characterised by a touch of humour."

Sherer, who was appointed Collector of Kanpur on the restoration of British authority, has written about the Nana's appearance. Sherer himself had never seen him, but had heard about him from several persons. One of these was Dr. J. N. Tresidder, Civil Surgeon of Kanpur, who used to attend Nana Saheb professionally. On the basis of the account of these persons Sherer has described Nana Saheb as being between 30 and 40 years of age at the time of the Mutiny, "of middle height, stolid features and increasing stoutness. He might well have passed for the ordinary shopkeeper of the bazar, had it not been for the Maratha contour of his turban of which, however, he did not affect a very pronounced type".†

According to Trevelyan, Nana Saheb was about 36 years of age at the time of the Mutiny. He had strongly-marked features which with a sallow complexion gave them a pleasing appearance. His head and face, according to Maratha custom, says Trevelyan, were "shaven clean". He was rather fat in built.

John Lang had been Nana Saheb's guest at Bithoor for some days. From his appearance and ways Lang concluded that Nana Saheb was "not a man of ability, nor a fool". Mowbray Thomson described him as "exceedingly corpulent, of sallow complexion, of middle height, with thoroughly marked features, and like all Marathas clean shaven on both head and face".‡

*This descriptive roll was circulated to Police and other Government authorities throughout India to facilitate the apprehension of Nana Saheb for whose arrest a reward of one lakh rupees, with a free pardon, had been announced. The original copy of the roll will be found in the Proceedings of the Government of the then North-Western Provinces in the Political Department for the month of January, 1864.

†Sherer, *Havelock's March on Kanpur.*

‡Thomson, *The Story of Kanpur.*

ATTAINMENTS AND CHARACTER

Nana Saheb had studied Sanskrit and had imbibed its culture. He had also been taught Persian and Urdu in which he was proficient. Besides, he learnt the use of the rifle and the sword, and was a keen horse-rider.

His knowledge of English was scanty. But on that account he was not wanting in refinement and taste attributed to Englishmen or to those well-versed in that language.

He subscribed to all the leading Anglo-Indian newspapers and had them read out to him in the morning daily by Mr. Todd† who held the post of English professor in his household. (This gentleman was previously holding a post on the East India Rail Road which was then under construction.) The purchase of these newspapers was an exhibition of the deep interest which Nana Saheb took in the activities of the British Government at home and abroad, in English history, arts and customs and in the Christian religion.‡

On the question of annexation of Avadh, Nana Saheb used to express the view that a war would one day be the result. On the other political issues of the time discussed in the newspapers, he formed intelligent opinions which he used to express fearlessly.

He was a sportsman too and had acquired a mastery in the game of billiards. He played the game admirably while yet slim enough to bend over the table conveniently. This game gave him an opportunity of meeting on familiar terms the British military officers stationed at Kanpur.‡

Nana Saheb was also a great swimmer and so were his brothers and the Rao Saheb, his nephew. It is said that during the rains, when the river was in full spate, they used to swim across from one bank to the other with the greatest ease.

Nana Saheb was a person of great piety and orthodox disposition. He had special veneration for the Ganga and would not enter its water without first washing his feet and hands. He would not scrub his body in the stream nor pollute the holy water in any other manner.** He would simply take a dip in as gentle a manner as possible, as if by doing otherwise he would be hurting the river which he held in such great esteem. In swimming too he would behave likewise. This extreme respect towards the Ganga gave rise to certain exaggerated accounts about him—one of these the author has heard from an old lady of Bithoor. She said that mother Ganga was so pleased with Nana Saheb that he could walk over the water with his sandals on to the opposite bank of the river. This, of course, was impossible if taken in its literal sense, but it does point to a basic truth, namely the great veneration in which Nana Saheb held the waters of the sacred river.

He was a "quiet, unostentatious young man, not at all addicted to any extravagant habits".§ He was simple in his ways, but liked wearing impressive dress and jewellery. In darbar he used to dress himself in *kimkhab* and put on jewellery and a head-dress studded with precious stones which Englishmen were fond of admiring.

In the matter of religion he was orthodox, but far from a bigot.§§ At least on one occasion he was seen accompanying a

†He was later killed during the up-rising at Kanpur.

‡Trevelyan.

**As for example, by rubbing oil on the body and then entering the water for a bath. Now-a-days it does not occur to any one, except to devout people, that he should not foul the water by washing dirty clothes in the river or bathing with soap.

§Rajnikant Gupta. *Sipahi Iuddher Itihas*, 5 Vols. (1886—1900), (Bengali), page 93.

§§John Lang, p. 116.

regiment of Kanpur to Church on a Sunday. He was riding in a beautiful phaeton drawn by two splendid grey horses.†

In Azimullah Khan's Diary it has been stated that Nana Saheb used to regard any elderly lady as his mother, and any lady equal in his age as a sister. Similarly, he respected elderly men as father and considered persons of his own age as brother. He used to entertain affectionate regard for all, and was greatly loved by every one in turn.

An instance may here be quoted to show what a great regard for the feelings of others Nana Saheb always carried in his heart. An European gentleman was coming from Kanpur to visit him on the phaeton which the Nana had placed at his disposal. The gentleman had with him his family which included a child. By ill-luck the child died on the way to Bithoor in the carriage. According to orthodox tradition, this carriage had now become contaminated by the touch of a dead body, and so it could not be used by Nana Saheb and his family, orthodox as they were. At first he thought of giving it away to some one, but dismissed the idea on the ground that that course would hurt the feelings of the aggrieved parents. The problem was what to do with the conveyance which could in no circumstances be retained by the family. The only alternative left was to burn it, and in spite of its great cost and beauty Nana Saheb had it burnt without any compunction.

HIS FONDNESS FOR ENTERTAINING GUESTS

Nana Saheb was fond of giving entertainments to the English gentry of Kanpur, and every now and then organised parties in the European style in his mansion at Bithoor. Elaborate arrangements were made, and dance and music provided after sumptuous meals. On these occasions he would dress himself in *kimkhab* and Kashmir scarfs and wear a head-dress studded with pearls and diamonds. He would also carry the old Baji Rao's State sword which was valued at three lakhs of rupees.‡ The same sword, it is said, was, until 1957, in the possession of Sri Devi Dayalu Gupta, proprietor, Gupta Shastralaya, Kanpur. On July 1 of that year he presented it to the President of India and it now forms part of the National Collection at New Delhi.

British officers wanting a change of climate went from Kanpur to Bithoor as guests of Nana Saheb who always received them with affection. Others also frequently visited him with their wives. At their departure, he used to make presents to them. All this generosity had naturally endeared him to the British officers and gentry at Kanpur. Many were under his obligation on one account or the other. They all praised him with one voice for his hospitality and goodness.

"Nothing could exceed the cordiality which he constantly displayed in his intercourse with our countrymen. The persons in authority placed an implicit confidence in his friendliness and good faith, and the ensigns emphatically pronounced him a capital fellow. He had a nod or a kind word for every sahib in the station ; hunting-parties and jewellery for the men, and picnics and shawls for the ladies. If a subaltern's wife required change of air, the Rajah's carriage was at the service of the young couple and the European apartments of Bithoor were put in order to receive them. If a civilian had overworked himself in court, he had but to speak the word, and the Rajah's

†Tuker *The Chronicle of Private Henry Metcalfe*, page 19.
‡Trevelyan.

elephants were sent on to the Oude jungles."*

But though Nana Saheb was profuse in entertaining the English, he himself, on his part, avoided return invitations from the European officers of Kanpur. It is said that he did so because the Government had not continued to him the honour of guns being fired in salute—a privilege which Baji Rao had enjoyed till his death. Another reason perhaps lay in the orthodox manners and customs of the Peshwa family.

OTHER HOBBIES

Animals were his special hobby, and people from afar visiting Brahmavart used to go and see his deer and gazelles, camels and panthers.

Amongst the pets of Nana Saheb was a wandaroo monkey (lion-tailed) which came into the possession of the British after the capture of Bithoor. It was kept for some time in Kanpur and thereafter sent to London to be kept in the Zoological Garden. Mr. Sherer had occasion later on, when in London, to go and see the monkey in the Garden where he found it in order.

Another pet similarly taken at Bithoor was a big squirrel, as big as a small rabbit. It was a costly and beautiful animal which remained with Sherer at Kanpur for some time. To the great regret of Sherer, it died after some time either because of undue excitement or perhaps change of food, for ignorant of its habits Sherer could not give it the food to which it was habituated.†

Amongst his other hobbies was the collection of arms. He had all kinds of swords of the best-tempered steel. Long-range rifles and big guns of different sizes were included in his collection of which he was justly proud. Trevelyan says that Nana Saheb's armoury had a rare collection of arms and fighting weapons of every age and country.

He had a large and excellent stable of horses, elephants and camels. These were coming on from the time of Maharaja Baji Rao. Nana Saheb was particularly fond of horses. It is said that none could excel him in horsemanship. There was a good collection of high-bred horses in his stables. Nana Saheb also maintained in good state the kennel left by Baji Rao and the menagerie of pigeons, falcons, peacocks and apes. On the sack of Bithoor an English soldier took possession of a pair of thorough-bred English bull-dogs belonging to Nana Saheb. It was estimated that they would have fetched a price of Rs.500 in Calcutta—quite a substantial amount in those days.‡

C. THIS PICTURE AND THAT

Ajodhya Prasad's Portrait

There has been a good deal of confusion about the true appearance and features of Nana Saheb. This has been caused by the fact that some time after the defeat of Nana Saheb at Kanpur in July, 1857, a picture was published in the *Illustrated London News* purporting to be that of Nana Saheb. This picture was not really his, but of a wealthy contractor by name Ajodhya Prasad or Jyotee Prasad. It was given out by that paper as the picture of Nana Saheb under intriguing circumstances.

Nana Saheb's name had become a household word in England and the newspapers of London were frantically trying to procure his picture. But none could be found as there did not, at that time, exist any portrait of Nana Saheb in London. The editor of the *Illustrated London News*,

*Trevelyan.
†Sherer, *Havelock's March on Kanpur.*
‡Groom, *With Havelock from Allahabad to Lucknow*, pages 41-42.



NOT NANA SAHEB

BUT AJODHYA PRASAD

whose portrait passed as the picture of Nana Saheb for a long time under mysterious circumstances. The real NANA SAHEB is below.



NANA SAHEB

This is from Shepherd's *A Personal* [illegible] *Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore*. It tallies with the description given by Sherer. Dr. Sen has reproduced this picture in his book as [illegible] authentic likeness of Nana Saheb as Shepherd knew him. The frontispiece of the present book has been done from this picture.



This picture with a beard resembles particularly in regard to the head-dress the portrait appearing in Savarkar's book (see page 13[illegible]-A of this book).



Another spurious picture of Nana Saheb. This too was published in certain newspapers with the caption of Nana Saheb.



This picture, with Gwalior or Scindhia-type head-dress, had appeared in a Marathi paper. The caption below it indicated that it was a reduced copy of the portrait of Nana Saheb on ivory, which had been published in the *Times of India* and which had been obtained from the library of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This too is an unreal picture.



This picture again with Scindhia-type turban first appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*, London and later in Percival Landon's book "1857", published in 1907. The book was originally published in instalments in the *Daily Telegraph*.



This picture also bears some resemblance to the picture in Savarkar's book, but it is far from the real Nana.

This too is an unreal picture. Save for the fact that the picture carries a beard which the Nana Saheb had grown in later years, this picture bears not the least resemblance to the real man.



however, continued his hectic efforts and sent out his artist to call on Indians of position happening to be in London to try to get a portrait of the Nana. In the course of his efforts, the artist came across the picture of Ajodhya Prasad which was in the possession of the well-known barrister, Mr. John Lang. With great difficulty he procured it for his paper. Knowing well that the picture was not of Nana Saheb, the editor nevertheless published it as his picture with a view to adding to the popularity of his paper in having been the first in showing to the English public the features and appearance of Nana Saheb. No one either in England or in India doubted the authenticity of this picture until 1893 when William Forbes-Mitchell published his *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny* in which the real story was told.

Ajodhya Prasad was a big banker and a Commissariat contractor of Meerut. Many years before the mutiny he had disputes with the East India Company about the settlement of his dues on account of supplies made to the army during the Second Sikh War. Ajodhya Prasad's claim was 3½ lakhs of rupees in excess of the amount which the Commissariat Department had worked out as due to him. So the Commissariat officers repudiated his claim. Not only that, they also started a criminal case against him for attempting to defraud Government by falsifying accounts. A special Commission was appointed by the Governor-General for the trial, and the Judge Advocate-General was put in charge of the prosecution. The sittings were held at Meerut during 1851-52. Wealthy as he was, Ajodhya Prasad engaged the services of Mr. John Lang; for this purpose he had sent his agent to England. John Lang ably defended his client against the legal might of the Government of India who had built up a strong *prima facie* case against the accused. But the learned barrister exposed the utter weakness of the prosecution during the cross-examination of high placed witnesses such as the Commissary General, his Deputy and their Assistants who contradicted each other and even themselves. In his able arguments, Mr. Lang showed that Government had been most unjust in prosecuting Ajodhya Prasad who had rendered valuable assistance to the State in their hour of need by supplying carriage for the material of the army and ration for the troops.

His arguments were so effective that the Judge Advocate-General declared that he felt ashamed to be connected with the case. In the result, Ajodhya Prasad was honourably acquitted. At the same time, a decree in his favour for his entire claim was passed. In his gratefulness to Mr. Lang, Ajodhya Prasad gave him, in addition to the stipulated fee, an honorarium of three lakhs of rupees. At Mr. Lang's asking, he also presented him with his portrait painted by a famous artist and encased in a jewelled frame costing twenty-five thousand rupees.

In remembrance of this generosity and affection of his client, Mr. Lang used to carry this portrait with him wherever he went. It was this portrait which the artist had seen with Mr. Lang in London. He said that it was just the thing he wanted. His point was that any portrait of an Indian prince could easily pass, amongst the people of England, as the picture of Nana Saheb and that, so long as the picture was impressive, as this one was, it mattered little whether it was really of Nana Saheb or of some other person. But Mr. Lang declined to part with it saying that he could not allow the picture of his dear client to be passed as that of Nana Saheb who was regarded in England as "the arch assassin of the Indian mutiny". Mr. Lang was then assured that the picture was really meant for the people of England and that there was no likelihood of the paper reaching Indian hands, much less the hands of Ajodhya Prasad. Anyhow the *Illustrated London News* was able to procure the picture from Mr. Lang and published it as that of Nana Saheb.

It was in these circumstances that the picture of Ajodhya Prasad was given out as the picture of Nana Saheb in the pages of the *Illustrated London News*. The picture of Ajodhya Prasad was in the dress of a Marwari banker, and those in India who had known Nana Saheb were, on seeing it, surprised to find that it did not resemble him in the least and wondered how he had allowed himself to be painted in the dress of a Marwari. Those who had known Ajodhya Prasad, but had not seen Nana Saheb, declared that the Nana was quite like Ajodhya Prasad. No one knew the mystery, however.

Mr. Forbes-Mitchell had become aware of the facts of the affair through Mr. Lang himself whom he gave a promise of secrecy. After both Mr. Lang and Ajodhya Prasad had died, Mr. Forbes-Mitchell felt that he would commit no breach of confidence in making the story public and, so feeling, he included it in his *Reminiscences*.

Still every body in India did not know about the mystery because Mr. Forbes-Mitchell's book was not in much circulation here. In many works, the picture of Ajodhya Prasad was printed as the picture of Nana Saheb. In 'The History of the Revolt in India', published in 1859 the following words were printed below this picture : "Nana Saheb—painted by Beechy, the painter of the King of Oudh, at Bithoor in the year 1850". This was all a fraudulent invention intended to give a historical importance to the picture, but it had its effect and no one doubted the authenticity of the portrait.

In several other works also, this false picture of Nana Saheb came to be published even after the publication of Forbes-Mitchell's *Reminiscences*. This was apparently because the latter book was known to few in India. In Sri Sunder Lal's monumental work *Bharat Men Angrezi Raj*, the same picture has been published.

In the memorial to Nana Saheb which was raised by the U. P. Government at Bithoor in 1957, a statue of Nana Saheb prepared on the basis of the same picture was erected. But the people of Bithoor and Kanpur who knew of this, represented to the Government that the statue was really of Ajodhya Prasad. Thereupon, it has been removed and replaced by another made out of the authentic portrait of Nana Saheb.

Other Pictures

Apart from the portrait of Ajodhya Prasad, several other spurious pictures of Nana Saheb have, from time to time, been published in the books and newspapers of different parts of India. These, with their brief descriptions, have been reproduced in the plates for the curiosity of the inquisitive reader.

At the same time there are several genuine portraits of Nana Saheb—genuine in the sense that their source is true. One of them appears as the frontispiece in this book ; others have been given in separate plates in this chapter.

OUR LIFE IS NOT THE LIFE OF ROSES AND OF LEAVES;
ELSE WHEREFORE THIS DEEP STRIFE, THIS PAIN OUR SOUL CONCEIVES?

CHAPTER TEN

HIS SUCCESSION

A. ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING SUCCESSION TO BAJI RAO.

STANDING INSTRUCTIONS OF LIEUT. GOVERNOR.

GOVERNMENT'S ACTION ON BAJI RAO'S DEATH.

DISPUTE WITH BAJI RAO'S WIDOWS.

B. NANA SAHEB'S REPRESENTATIONS :

DISCONTINUANCE OF PENSION.

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JAGIR AS LIFE-INTEREST ONLY.

WITHDRAWAL OF EXEMPTION FROM PROCESS OF COURTS.

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ANNEXURE I : NANA SAHEB'S MEMORIAL TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL REGARDING PENSION AND JAGIR.

ANNEXURE II : MEMORIAL TO COURT OF DIRECTORS ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

ANNEXURE III : MEMORIAL TO GOVERNOR-GENERAL REGARDING TITLE AND SEAL.

A. ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING SUCCESSION TO BAJI RAO

STANDING INSTRUCTIONS OF LT. GOVERNOR

In 1840 Baji Rao had so deteriorated in health as to give rise to apprehensions about his survival. To meet any untoward incidents arising on his death, the Lieut. Governor conveyed to Colonel Manson, the Commissioner with Baji Rao, instructions about the measures to be adopted, on the demise of His Highness, for the preservation of the public peace and the security of his property. The standing instructions were that "on the actual demise of Baji Rao the Commissioner was to seal up all places supposed to contain treasure or valuable property and to place adequate guards over them". These were contained in a letter from the Government of the North-Western Provinces, dated November 12, 1840.

Soon after, Baji Rao executed a will bequeathing all his property and privileges to his adopted son, Nana Saheb, who had then attained the age of 25 years and was expected to take charge of the property on the demise of the Maharaja without the intervention of

the Commissioner at Bithoor or the Civil authorities at Kanpur. It was in the following terms :

"This is written for the purpose of making known to Her Majesty the Queen of England, the Honorable the East India Company and to all men. That Dhondoo Punt Nana, my eldest son, and Gungadhur Rao, my youngest and third son, and Sada Shew Punt Dada, son of my second son Pandoo Rung Rao, my grandson; these three are my sons and grandson. After me, Dhandon (Dhondoo) Punt Nama (Nana), my eldest son, Mookh Purdhan, shall inherit, and be the sole master of the Guddee of Peishwa, the Dominions, Wealth, Desh Mookhee, etc., Watum (family) possessions, Treasure and all my real and personal property. And he, Dhondoo Punt Nana and his Heirs shall inherit the Rank of Peishwa, the Dominions, Wealth etc. and his younger Brother Gungadhur Rao, and his nephew Pundoo Rung Rao Sada Shew, and their children, as it becomes a Brother, and to the servants and the Ryuts, as it is proper, he shall afford due support and maintenance. And Gungadhur Rao and Pundoo Rung Rao, the servants, the Ryuts, etc. shall pay obedience to Dhondoo Punt Nana, Mookh Purdhan and continue to serve him with fidelity and be subject unto him. And if I should hereafter beget a son of my own body then he shall, as aforesaid be the Mookh Purdhan and Heir to Guddee of Peishwa; and possess all the Dominions, Wealth, Desh Mookhee, etc., Watundaree, Treasure, and all my property, whatsoever; and his Heirs from generation to generation. And shall provide, as is proper, for his brothers, servants and Ryuts. And Dhondoo Punt Nana and all others shall pay obedience to him and his Heirs. This Testament I have written with my free will and pleasure, dated 4th Shuval Mittee Aghan Buddee 5th Sakeh as above, according with 11th December, 1839.* After this, what can be said more."

This will materially altered the circumstances under which the previous instructions had been issued and so Colonel Manson wrote to Government asking for instructions to be followed on the Maharaja's death in the changed conditions. He was informed that the existence of an heir of mature age named in the ex-Peshwa's will as successor to the whole of his property rendered unnecessary the precautions which had been laid down earlier. It was explained that "on the demise of Baji Rao the legal heir would enter at once into possession of the property, and it would be only necessary for Lieut. Colonel P. Manson to afford him all due assistance in effecting this object and to aid him, as far as might be requisite, in making proper arrangements for the support of the other branches of the family who were left dependant on him under the terms of the will."

GOVERNMENT'S ACTION ON BAJI RAO'S DEATH

Colonel Manson reported immediately after the event, the death of His Highness Maharaja Baji Rao to the Lieut. Governor and asked for further instructions. He was then asked to send a prompt report about the amount of property left by the late Peshwa and to furnish a list of the dependants for whose support it was necessary that provision be made, together with any suggestions that he might have to offer on the subject.

In the meanwhile, Subedar Ram Chandra Pant, the late Peshwa's manager, submitted to Colonel Manson a communication regarding the present position and future prospects of the family and adherents of the Maharaja. It was forwarded to Government by Colonel Manson on February 10, 1851. With reference to this communication. Colonel Manson was informed that the Lt. Governor could make no recommendations to the Governor-General on the subject without first being in possession of particulars regarding the number, age, rank and state of circumstances of the family and dependants of the late Maharaja, which information he was asked to furnish without delay. At the same time Colonel Manson was cautioned against holding out any hope for future support from the British Government to any of the retainers, and asked that officer to use all the means in his power to induce them speedily to disperse and to return to the Deccan. As regards the claim of Nana Saheb for the continuance of Baji Rao's jagir and his pension, Colonel Manson was directed carefully to abstain from admitting his right to inherit anything further than the personal property of his adoptive father.

* The document was actually signed and sealed by the Maharaja on April 30, 1841, in the presence of certain witnesses other than those who had witnessed the deed on December 11, 1839, one of these earlier witnesses being Colonel Manson, the Commissioner with Baji Rao.

In the meanwhile, Colonel Manson proceeded on leave and his place was taken by Mr. Morland, the Collector and Magistrate of Kanpur, who submitted a detailed report with a statement of the property left by the ex-Peshwa and a list of his adherents, together with an application from the Nana praying that some portion of the lapsed pension might be continued to him.

The report showed that of the retainers of Baji Rao some had left Bithoor, others had remained in the service of Nana Saheb, while others of the class of pandits, etc., were expected soon to disperse.* There remained a total of 30 individuals who were apparently unprovided for and whose aggregate salaries in Baji Rao's time amounted to Rs.2,706 per mensem. In addition there were 26 widows of his deceased adherents who had always been maintained by Baji Rao.

About the immediate members of Baji Rao's family the report mentioned the following, apart from Nana Saheb, the heir :

Ganga Dhar Rao	.. second adopted son.
Pandu Rung Rao	.. grand-son.
Maina Bai	.. first widow.
Tayee Bai	.. second widow.
Yoga Bai	.. first daughter.
Koosooma Bai	.. second daughter.
Chemmuji Appa	.. grand-nephew.

All the above had their separate establishments, the support of which fell on Nana Saheb, so stated Mr. Morland.

As regards the Peshwa's property it was estimated at 16 lakhs in Company's paper (Government Promissory Notes) yielding an annual income of Rs.80,000, besides jewels and plate of the value of 11 lakhs plus 3 lakhs of rupees in gold. It was added in the report that a greater part of the last item was said to have been expended in the payment of current debts.

After giving these particulars Mr. Morland recommended that a portion of Baji Rao's pension should be continued for the support of his family and adherents.

THE EX-PESHWA'S PENSION.

The case was then referred by the Local Government to the Governor General in Council, but in so doing the Lt. Governor did not endorse Mr. Morland's recommendation about the continuance of the pension. He expressed the view : "The very liberal allowance enjoyed for so long a period by the late Baji Rao should have enabled him to make an ample provision for his family". He had left none but adopted sons and the Lt. Governor did not think that these had any claim for further support from Government. He also observed that Baji Rao was commonly supposed to have amassed a much larger sum than stated in the report and that the accounts of the treasure left by him in gold and silver might be open to some suspicion as they appear to have been derived simply from the statement of the present owner.

The Governor General agreed with the Lt. Governor and characterised as "uncalled for and unreasonable, the recommendation of Mr. Morland for a continuance of a portion of the pension to Nana Saheb." It was added that Baji Rao's family had no claim on the Government and that the Governor-General did not consent to any portion of public revenues being conferred on them. In this connection the following minute recorded by the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, has become classic :

"In 33 years the Peshwa received the enormous sum of more than two and a half millions sterling. He had

*On the death of Baji Rao some of his adherents who were receiving pensions from the Government of Bombay applied for the transfer of the payment of their pensions from the sub-treasury at Bithoor to the Sholapur treasury in the State of Bombay as these pensioners were now desirous of leaving Bithoor. The transfers were sanctioned.

no charges to maintain, no sons of his own and has bequeathed 28 lakhs for his family. Those who remain have no claim whatever on the consideration of the British Government. They have no claim on its charity, because the income left to them is amply sufficient for them."*

Lord Dalhousie's conclusion was endorsed by the Directors of the Company who wrote to the Government of India on May 19, 1852 : "We entirely approve of the decision of the Governor General that the adopted son and dependants of Baji Rao have no claim upon the British Government. The large pension which the ex-Peshwa enjoyed during thirty-three years afforded him the means of making an abundant provision for his family and dependants, and the property which he is known to have left is amply sufficient for their support."

This was before Nana Saheb's memorial had reached the Court of Directors. Later, when it came up, the Directors rejected it summarily and asked the Government of India to "inform the memorialist that the pension of his adoptive father was not hereditary, that he had no claim whatever to it and that his application is wholly inadmissible."

DISPUTE WITH BAJI RAO'S WIDOWS

Maina Bai and Tayee Bai, widows of Baji Rao, complained to Government that Nana Saheb had placed them under personal restraint and was subjecting them to much hardship and inconvenience. They also complained of having been deprived of their jewels, and further that Nana Saheb had held forth serious threats to them in the event of their not obeying his orders. The Baies were not disposed to submit to this position of obedience—on the contrary they disputed the Nana's right to exercise over them any control whatever. They requested that the management of the property and the affairs of their late husband be placed in their own hands and that Nana Saheb too be made subject to their authority. On investigation the complaint was found to be based on no real grounds. It also appeared that the Baies, having been instigated by a factious party, were not willing to recognise the Nana as the acknowledged heir to Baji Rao and to submit to his authority. It was further found that in order to maintain the necessary authority in the palace Nana Saheb had taken certain precautionary measures necessitated by the discontent and disaffection on the part of the ladies in their endeavour to have their own way independently of the new head of the family.

In the result, the Baies were informed by Government that Nana Saheb was the adopted son and the legal heir of the ex-Peshwa, and had been recognised as such by the British Government ; therefore they should acknowledge him as the head of the family and render to him the deference and obedience which were due to him as such. The ladies were further told that the investigations made by the Government on their complaints showed that they were suffering no other restraint than that which was inseparable from their position and rank, and that they would be allowed every proper indulgence if they only conformed themselves to the reasonable wishes of Nana Saheb.

At the same time the Lt. Governor expressed his concurrence in the view of Mr. Greathed, who was now the Commissioner at Bithoor, regarding the relations between the widows and Nana Saheb, and authorised that officer to make some declaration to induce the ladies to submit themselves to Nana Saheb and to live with him on amicable terms. In his report to the Lt. Governor, on which the above orders were passed, Mr. Greathed had suggested that "it would tend to the eventual happiness and comfort of the widows if they were speedily made sensible of the dependence in which they were left by their husband's will on the bounty of his heir".

Mr. Greathed went on also to suggest that

*Banerjee, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. I, p. 347, 'Lord Dalhousie on Annexation of Indian States.'

in furtherance of the above object as well as to prevent further misapprehensions he be permitted to divest himself of the title of Commissioner at Bithoor and to tender to Government the seals* of his office. He added that until this was done it would not be clearly understood by the ladies and the other members of the ex-Peshwa's household that separate jurisdiction, apart from the constituted courts, had now, on the death of that dignitary, ceased to exist in Bithoor and that the members of the Peshwa's family must look for redress of grievances to the ordinary tribunals of the country. On this, the Lt. Governor informed Mr. Greathed that the office of the Commissioner at Bithoor had been abolished by orders which had separately been passed and in which it was also provided that the transactions regarding the Peshwa's family would thenceforth be conducted by the Magistrate and Collector of Kanpur. At the same time, the Lt. Governor suggested to Mr. Greathed that it was desirable that he himself should still "maintain to a certain extent the friendly deportment and confidential intercourse which had till then been observed towards the family by himself and his predecessors, and to continue in a kind spirit to offer them advice in their difficulties and to maintain over them that influence which might tend to save them from much embarrassment."

As regards the extension of the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts of British India over the members of the late Peshwa's family, the Lt. Governor took a considerate view of the matter and advised Mr. Greathed that though Government possessed no legal authority to control the actions of these persons, except through the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, he, Mr. Greathed, might still be able, in many respects, to interpose his good offices for the reconcilement of differences between the several members of the family or for the prudent management of their affairs. The Lt. Governor felt confident that Mr. Greathed would be able to act effectively and with discretion in these matters "for the good of the family whose falling fortunes commanded both sympathy and respect".

It was also decided that, until the affairs of the family of Baji Rao were in some degree settled, the Magistrate and Collector of Kanpur should retain the title and functions of officiating Commissioner, but that there was no necessity of keeping any longer a permanent officer under that designation. With the abolition of the post of Commissioner, its establishment was allowed gratuities, and then disbanded or incorporated in the Kanpur Collectorate.

Baji Rao's widows had also probably a hand in the filing of a claim against Nana Saheb by Balwant Rao Athwale, the father of the two widows and the grandfather of the minor daughters of Baji Rao. The claim was preferred with Government on behalf of the daughters and the plea taken was that in the absence of a natural-born son to Baji Rao, the daughters were the legal heirs of his property according to Hindu law; that Nana Saheb as the adopted son had no right to suceeed the late Peshwa. Government, however, did not entertain the claim and Sri Athwale was informed that Nana Saheb was the *de jure* and *de facto* head of the Peshwa's family.

A court case against Nana Saheb was also filed, again at the instigation perhaps of the dissatisfied widows, by young Chimnaji Thatte, the grandson of Chimnaji Appa, Baji Rao's brother. The suit was for the recovery from Nana Saheb of half of the property left by Baji Rao. The action was ultimately dismissed.

*These seals were later, on the abolition of Bithoor Commissionership, broken under the orders of the Lieut. Governor and the sale proceeds of the bullion amounting to Rs.5.6 deposited into the Government treasury.

B. NANA SAHEB'S REPRESENTATIONS

DISCONTINUANCE OF PENSION

It had been the intention of the Government of India that Baji Rao's pension would cease on his death. They had made it clear even during the life time of Baji Rao that his heirs would not be entitled to any portion of his pension. This was the policy which they had adopted in the case of the pension of Chimnaji Appa* when he died at Varanasi in 1830 and when his widow and daughter were not given any portion of the former's pension. In these circumstances the discontinuance of the pension on Baji Rao's death was not a matter of surprise. Still Nana Saheb having faith in the generosity and fairness of the British entertained hopes that the decision would be reversed and at least a portion of the pension would be continued to him for the support of himself and those others who constituted the family of the Peshwa, namely the widows and the daughters of Baji Rao.

He was disappointed in his hope. His memorials to the Lt. Governor, then to the Governor-General and finally to the Court of Directors of the East India Company in London were all in turn rejected. His last effort to obtain redress by sending a personal representative, his Diwan, Azimullah Khan, to plead his case in England also failed. That the decision to discontinue the pension was unjust will be evident from the circumstances now narrated. During his life-time, Maharaja Baji Rao had preferred a request to the Government of India that after his death a monetary provision be made by Government for Nana Saheb whom he had adopted as his son, the amount being suited to his dignity and position as the son of an ex-ruler. With the concurrence of the Court of Directors the Governor-General informed the Maharaja that the subject would be considered at an appropriate season.† It was in these circumstances that Nana Saheb was led to entertain hopes of a portion of Baji Rao's pension being continued to him after the demise of his adoptive father. The terms‡ offered by General Malcolm at the time of Peshwa Baji Rao's surrender in 1818 strengthened the expectation inasmuch as they contained a stipulation about the payment of pension to Baji Rao for the support of himself and his *family*. Those terms also contained a clause that suitable provision would be made for the support of Baji Rao's adherents. Baji Rao too was hopeful about this.

Nana Saheb made a full and reasoned-out memorial to the Governor General against the orders by which the pension had been discontinued. The document, which is self-explanatory, is reproduced in *Annexure I* to this chapter.

It will be seen that the principal argument of Nana Saheb was that the pension stipulated in the promise of General Malcolm was of a hereditary character meant for the support of the Peshwa and his family while he lived, and after his death was to be enjoyed by his successors who were to use it for the support of the surviving members of the Peshwa's family, such as his widows and daughters. The *successors* came in because in the promise of surrender it was specifically provided that Baji Rao would resign the sovereignty of his kingdom for himself and his *successors*. But the Governor General would not change the order although it was neither sound nor informed by equity and fairplay.

*Chimnaji Appa was Baji Rao's brother and had been granted a pension of Rs.2,00,000 per annum by the British Government.

†This question of a separate provision for Nana Saheb was distinct from the question of Baji Rao's pension which the Government had not intended to continue.

‡These have been given in full in Chapter 6

Nana Saheb's memorial to the Court of Directors of the East India Company was also unsuccessful. A copy of this memorial is with *Annexure II* at the end of this chapter.

In the last resort, Nana Saheb sent his Diwan, Azimullah Khan, to London to plead his case before the authorities there. This mission also failed. It involved Nana Saheb in an expenditure of several lakhs of rupees. Quite substantial amounts were said to have been paid to the officials of the Company to win their favour.

In his Diary, Azimullah Khan has made a brief reference to his visit to England to plead the cause of Nana Saheb. In London, Azimullah Khan met Rangoji Bapu who had gone there to plead a similar case of the Maharaja of Satara. Azimullah Khan states that he had an interview with Queen Victoria. He adds that the ladies of high family in England were greatly fascinated by his personality.

That the discontinuance of the pension was unfair was the opinion of many an Englishman at that time. They held that, whatever might have been the legal aspects of the case, equity demanded that a portion of the pension should have been conceded to his family. They saw force in the argument that the pension had been granted to Baji Rao for the support of himself and the family, and the *family* had a legal claim to the pension irrespective of whatever savings Baji Rao might have effected in his life-time.

According to Azimullah Khan's Diary Nana Saheb did not openly express his bitterness towards the English on account of the pension affair, but he is said to have made secret preparations against the British and for this purpose to have undertook, on Azimullah Khan's return to India, a tour of the country in order to organise a revolt against the Government. The Diary adds that the tour was undertaken in the guise of pilgrimage, the places visited being Varanasi, Allahabad, Batesar, Gaya, Janakpur, Parasnath, Jagannath Puri, Panchwati, Rameshwaram, Dwarka, Nasik, Abu, Ujjain, Mathura, Sri Badrinath and Kamrup. Everywhere great welcome was accorded to him. By his personality and manners Nana Saheb impressed every one he met. The Diary also states that during his tour Nana Saheb secretly informed the people that a revolt would be started on May 31, 1857, throughout the country.

In the Diary it is stated also that during his tour Nana Saheb met the Maharaja of Sangli who made a proposal for the marriage of his niece to him. The proposal was accepted and the marriage was celebrated with great pomp and show. According to the Diary, therefore, the marriage took place shortly before the revolt of 1857.

SUCCESSION TO TITLE AND SEAL

As we have seen in Chapter 6 the Company's Government did not recognise the style and title of Peshwa Baji Rao after his surrender to General Malcolm. They styled him simply as "His Highness the Maharaja Baji Rao". The ex-monarch had to reconcile himself to this indignity also, and consequently had his seals and the badges of his servants cast accordingly. On the death of Baji Rao, Nana Saheb as his son and successor began to use the title of Maharaja and had his own seals prepared in that style. He also asked for the formal permission of the Government to use for his personal attendants badges bearing an inscription of the purport that the attendants were his servants. Declining the request the Government informed him that "the Governor-General in Council recognised no such person as Maharaja Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb".

Upon this Nana Saheb made a well-reasoned representation to the Governor-General seeking reconsideration of the orders. Sound reasons were given in it for the casting of the badges with the title of Maharaja. This

too was rejected. A copy of it appears in *Annexure III* to this chapter.

In the result, Nana Saheb was left with the simple description of Sriman Nana Dhondu Pant Bahadur.

JAGIR AS LIFE-INTEREST ONLY

In the Jagir of Baji Rao the British granted only a life interest to Nana Saheb. This was also unfair. As heir to Baji Rao, he was entitled to a full and absolute interest in the jagir lands with power of disposal (sale, etc.), and not a limited interest for life only which meant that he could not, unlike a full owner, sell or otherwise dispose of the property. The jagir was, however, to continue to remain rent-free, but a proviso was added that this would be so only if he resided at Bithoor.

EXEMPTION FROM PROCESS OF COURT WITHDRAWN

The Government lost no time in repealing the Regulation* of 1832 by which Baji Rao and his retinue and the other persons living with him, within the limits of his jagir, had been exempted from the authority of the ordinary law courts. The repeal was done by another Regulation which the Governor-General in Council passed in February, 1852. In the result Nana Saheb was reduced to the status of a common subject of the Company—a position which at once exposed him to the vexation of being dragged into law courts. This is what actually happened soon after.

SUPPLY OF AMMUNITION DISCONTINUED

During the time of Baji Rao an annual supply of one thousand rounds of blank musket cartridges used to be issued to his Subedar, Ramchandra Pant. The supply was discontinued on Baji Rao's death under the orders of Lt. Governor although Mr. Morland, the officiating Commissioner at Bithoor, had explained that the supply in the past had always been allowed to the Subedar for the particular purpose of firing salutes on the occasion of the birth anniversary of God Hanuman and *not* for the special use of the ex-Peshwa. This argument did not find favour with the Lt. Governor who explained that the Subedar could only have received the blank cartridges in virtue of his post in the Peshwa's household and that as that post no longer existed there was no necessity for the continuance of the indulgence.

AZIMULLAH KHAN

When Nana Saheb took the management of the affairs of the family in his hands on the death of Baji Rao he appointed Azimullah Khan as his Diwan. Azimullah Khan, thereupon, took the vow that he would serve Nana Saheb faithfully throughout his life.† As already stated, Azimullah Khan was deputed by Nana Saheb to go and plead his pension case before the authorities in England. He also took part in the up-rising at Kanpur. Azimullah Khan was a man of special parts and impressive personality; a brief account of him and his Diary has been given in Part IV, *Appendix B.*

"I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheeks a fading rose,
Fast withereth too."

*Regulation I of 1832.
†Azimullah Khan's Diary.

ANNEXURE I

(Referred to at page 144)

Nana Saheb's Memorial to the Governor General regarding Pension and Jagir

To

The Most Noble the Governor General of India in Council.

The Memorial of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb, son and heir of the late Maharaja Bajee Rao Peishwa Punt Purdhan Bahadoor.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist's father was the sovereign of the Mahratta empire and was connected by the closest ties of friendship with the East India Company's Government. He was one of the princes with whom the Company entered into an alliance for the partition of the territories of the Mysore principality. By a treaty with him dated the 31st December, 1802, the Company acquired territories yielding an annual revenue of Twenty-six Lacs and by the subsequent treaty of the 13th June, 1817, territories with an annual revenue of Thirty-four Lacs were ceded to them. On the unhappy rupture between him and the Company, he ceded to them the remains of his empire, on the condition that a pension of not less than Eight Lacs should be accorded, for the support of himself and family and a liberal provision made for his adherents. By that act he placed the Company in the position of arbiters of the destinies of India and gave the strongest proof which could be afforded of his confidence in their justice and liberality. When the Peshwa had thus denuded himself of sovereignty and power, the Marquis of Hastings, acting upon the letter rather than the spirit of the stipulations which had been entered into, under date the 1st June, 1818, by Brigadier General Malcolm, determined to limit the pension to the sum therein specified. By this singular determination, the actual head of the Mahratta empire, who had previously made great cessions, and at the time yielded up all that remained to him, who had abdicated sovereignty to take up the position of a dependent of the Company, was placed on a footing with his adopted brother Imrut Rao, for the latter though but a subject, formerly resigning his pretensions to power and putting himself under the protection of the dominant authority, received for himself and his adopted son a pension only less by one Lac than that which was deemed adequate for the sovereign of the Deccan.

2. That your Memorialist's father received the territory of Bithoor in the North Western Provinces, as a Jagheer, in which, by Regulation I of 1832, he was permitted to exercise sovereignty over his adherents exempt from the interference of the Company's Civil and Criminal Courts. An Officer of the Company was also placed with him, to afford him the benefit of his aid and advice, and to be the medium of communication with the Government.

3. That your Memorialist's father, having attained an advanced age without the probability of leaving any son of his loins to perpetuate his name, and fulfil the duties of religion towards the names of his ancestors and having for that purpose adopted your Memorialist and other sons in accordance with the precepts of the Shasters, was solicitous to enjoy the satisfaction of having secured to them a provision suitable to his dignity and station. For that purpose a request was preferred by him in 1844, through the channel of the Commissioner to the Supreme Government, and he was informed that the subject would be considered at a proper season, and that that resolution had been approved of by the Honorable the Court of Directors. Hence he was impressed with the belief that his family would after his demise obtain a suitable provision from the justice and liberality of the Company's Government, which indeed was pledged by the stipulations of 1818 to provide not only for himself but for his family. Thus although about the well-being, comfort, and dignity of their families, Hindoo princes are more than ordinarily solicitous, yet your Memorialist's father relied on the express guarantee and subsequent implied promise of the Company's Government, for the fulfilment of that expectation; and, with the exception of a sum of money invested in the public securities and yielding an annual income of 80,000 Rupees, devoted the whole of his revenue to the maintenance of his state, the comfort of his house, and the support of his retainers.

4. That your Memorialist's father died on the 28th January, 1851 leaving, besides your Memorialist and other adopted sons and their children, a large family and a band of faithful adherents, with no other than the resources just mentioned, not amounting to a truth (*sic.*) of the allowance he received from the Company. The inadequacy of the sum for the maintenance of the family and establishment of a prince who was at the head of Mahratta sovereigns, may be easily conceived. But it is impossible for your Memorialist to express the surprise and grief with which he learnt that the Company's stipulated allowance was to be at once and wholly discontinued; that the Peishwa's family were to be left dependent on their own trifling resources and that even the sovereignty of the Jagheer of Bithoor, which had been conceded to preserve his family and adherents from the indignity of being summoned before the Company's Courts was to be resumed.

5. That your Memorialist on the 24th June, 1851 submitted a Memorial of the circumstances, through the Commissioner, to the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces, under whose orders that Officer had been placed; but was informed that His Honor had determined, on the 3rd October last that the pension could not be continued, and that the Jagheer only would be continued, to your Memorialist rent-free for life, but that the residents therein would be made amenable to the Company's Courts. Whether those orders were passed with the sanction of your Lordship in Council or not, your Memorialist is not aware. The cessation of the allowance, immediately on the death of the Peishwa would seem to imply a foregone conclusion. But as your Memorialist's father had been persuaded to hope for a continuance of the pension to his family and the perpetuation of his state and dignity in your Memorialist, as will be seen from the subjoined translation of his Will, and as your Memorialist has had no intimation from the Supreme Government of the intention to treat the family of one of the sovereign princes of

India so differently from the usual course of the liberal and generous policy of the Company's Government, it is incumbent on him to lay the features of the case primarily before your Lordship in Council, with a view to the consideration thereof in all its bearings.

6. That your Memorialist would fain believe that the determination to withhold the pension granted by a solemn pact, has been arrived at without due consideration of the terms guaranteed by the Company. Those terms clearly include the support of the family as well as of the Peishwa; for the 4th article expressly states "that Bajee Rao shall, on his voluntarily agreeing to this arrangement, receive a liberal pension from the Company's Government for the support of himself and family". The Peishwa fulfilled all that had been required from him, ceded his dominions to the Company, and placed himself and his family in their hands. The Company have in part performed their engagement, by providing for his support during his life on the limited scale fixed by Lord Hastings; but they overlooked that part which respects his family. The mention of his family implies a provision for their support after his demise. In any other case such mention was unnecessary as a provision for the support of the prince necessarily included the maintenance of his family. Even if there had been no mention of the family in the stipulation between the Peishwa and the Company, the nature and conditions of the document would supply the omission. For while the former, in the terms of first article, "resigned for himself and successors all right, title, and claim over the Government of Poonah," how can it be supposed by any liberal, any considerate mind, that the latter are not bound to provide a suitable support not only for himself but also for his successors, in all time to come out of the revenues which they derive in perpetuity from the dominions ceded to them? Your Memorialist accordingly submits to the consideration of your Lordship in Council, whether it is consistent with the justice and liberality which ought to characterise sovereign states, to withdraw from the family, immediately on the death of its head, the support accorded under such circumstances.

7. That your Memorialist is at a loss to account for the difference between the treatment by the Company of the descendants of other princes and that experienced by the family of the Peishwa represented by him. The ruler of Mysore evinced the most implacable hostilities towards the Company's Government; and your Memorialist's father was one of the princes whose aid was evoked by the Company to crush a relentless enemy. When that Chieftain fell sword in hand, the Company, far from abandoning his progeny to their fate, have afforded an asylum and a liberal support to more than one generation of his descendants, without distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate. With equal or even greater liberality the Company delivered the dethroned Emperor of Delhi from a dungeon, re-invested him with the insignia of sovereignty and assigned to him a munificent revenue which is continued to his descendants to the present day. Wherein is your Memorialist's case different? It is true that the Peishwa, after years of amity with the British, during which he assigned to them territorial revenues to the amount of half a Crore of Rupees, was unhappily engaged in war with them by which he perilled his throne. But as he was not reduced to extremities and even if reduced closed with the terms proposed to him by the British Commander and ceded his rich domains to place himself and his family under the fostering care of the Company; and as the Company still profit by the revenues of his hereditary possessions on what principle are his descendants deprived of the pension included in those terms and vestiges of sovereignty? Wherein are the claims of his family to the favour and consideration of the Company, less than those of the descendants of the conquered (*sic.*) Mysorean or the captive Mogul?

8. That your Memorialist claims the continuance of the stipulated pension both for the family of the Peishwa, and for himself, as the representative of that prince. Your Lordship in Council is aware that the Peishwa has left a family who are entitled to a suitable support as such from the Company on the terms of the stipulation and adopted, under the injunctions of the Hindoo law, three sons of whom your Memorialist is the eldest and, as such as well as by the Will already alluded to, his successor to his dignity and rights. Your Memorialist cannot suppose that Your Lordship in Council is ignorant that by the Hindoo Law the adopted son in no respect differs from the natural son But if any doubt exists, Your Memorialist begs leave to refer to the authority of Mr. Sutherland: "The religious ordinances of the Hindoos (he remarks) inculcate the indispensable necessity that a man should be survived by a male off-spring for performing his exequial rites and other purposes. In consequence, on defect of real legitimate issue, the affiliation under prescribed rules, of a kinsman or other person is enjoined; and an individual thus regularly adopted acquires the filial rights which attach to the real son." "The adopted son", to use the words of another distinguished writer on Hindoo law, "is to all intents and purposes a member of the family of his adopting father, and he succeeds to his property, collaterally as well as lineally."

Your Memorialist, being reduced to great straits by the measures which have been pursued towards him, solicits the consideration of your Lordship in Council to his claim to the continuance, first of the stipulated pension to him and his successors, and secondly of the territory of Bithour in its present relations. Your Memorialist trusts he will be favoured at an early date with the results of your Lordship's deliberations, as every day adds to the distresses of his situation.

And Your Memorialist shall ever pray for the stability and prosperity of the British Government in India.

Prior to the submission of this formal memorial, Nana Saheb had submitted a sort of an informal memorandum to Mr. Morland, the officiating Commissioner at Bithoor regarding his pension. It is reproduced below. Though there is some confusion about the date, this is apparently the memorial to which a reference has been made in paragraph 5 of the above memorial.

YADASHT FROM SREEMUNT DHONDOO PUNT NANA SAHEB ELDEST ADOPTED SON AND HEIR OF SREEMUNT PUNT PURDHAN MAHARAJA BAJI RAO SAHEB BAHADUR DECEASED TO THE ADDRESS OF EDWARD HENRY MORLAND,

ESQUIRE, OFFICIATING COMMISSIONER, DATED THE 19TH JULY, 1851 :

States that after the demise of the late Maharajah, Col. James Manson, late Commissioner, submitted a report on the subject of the continuance of the Jagheer and pension enjoyed by the late Maharajah to me as his Heir and for a provision for the old adherents of the deceased for the favourable consideration of the Hon'ble the Lieutt. Governor with copy of a yadasht on the subject, dated 7th February, 1851. After which you required a list of the old adherents of the Maharajah, and the property left by him and I was informed that there was no hope of a provision for me from Government: such an intention on the part of the British Government is incompatible with its known liberality and munificence and deserves reconsideration because after the decease of the Chiefs and Sirdars of Hindoostan it has invariably been a custom with the British Government to continue their possessions or pensions to their Heirs and families, and there is no instance in which the family of any chief of this country was denied the fulfilment of their expectations. Instance the states of Gwalior, Indore, Bhurtpore, Nagpore, Benares, Rosdhan, Kudaweah, Banda, Bhopaul, Barodah and besides this it is known to all the officers of the British Government and the whole world that my deceased ancestor, a period of 33 years ago, left Deccan, his native country, and immense possessions and came and took up his abode at Bithoor since when to the latest moment of his life he conducted himself in a becoming manner and entirely to the satisfaction of the British Government. The Chiefs of Gwalior and Nagpore and other states enumerated above were the servants of the late Maharajah and lived under his authority. To the Heirs of these, the British Government has continued and secured vast possessions; therefore how am I a son and Heir of the late Peishwa of the Deccan, and Hindoostan (which high office continued in his family for generations) considered unworthy of the consideration and favour of the British Government? Nay to the contrary I claim greater share of its consideration and liberality.

Formerly, some years ago it was decided by Government and approved of by the Hon'ble the Court of Directors that the question of provision for the family of the Maharajah will be duly considered after his death. From the perusal of the list of the property left by the Maharajah forwarded to you with the lists of the servants of the deceased, it must be apparent to you that the property left by him is not such as to enable the whole of the members of his family to live with that degree of respectability to which they have been accustomed. The income is indeed quite inadequate to the expense and a greater reduction in the Establishment than has already been effected by your advice is impossible and will reflect discredit on the family. Besides the officers of the British Government I have no other supporter and as the late Maharajah, with his expiring breath, consigned me to the care of Col. Manson the late Commr. with the firm hope of future provision being made for his family, I trust even this circumstance gives me a title to the favourable consideration of the British Government.

I therefore request you will have the kindness to forward this Memorandum to the Hon'ble the Lieut. Governor and the Most Noble the Governor General recommending the continuance of the pension and Jagheer of the late Maharajah to his family. I entertain sanguine hopes from the liberality of the British Government that my solicitation will meet with a favourable consideration from these high and humane functionaries and that a provision suited to the rank of the late Maharajah will be granted to me as no person having claims to the consideration of Government has yet been denied. I now consider His Honor the Lieut. Governor and His Lordship the Governor General in the room of my late father the Maharajah on whom the duty of protecting me and providing for my future support has now devolved.

(Sd.) DHONDOO PUNT NANA SAHEB.

Free Translation

(Sd.) E. H. MORLAND,
Officiating Commissioner.

ANNEXURE II

(*Referred to at page* 145)

Nana Saheb's Memorial regarding Pension and Jagir to the Court of Directors

To *The Honorable the Court of Directors of the East India Company.*

The Memorial of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb, son and heir of the late Maharajah Bajee Rao Peshwa Punt Purdhan Bahadoor.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist's father died on the 28th January, 1851, in the full confidence that the pension which had been accorded to him by the stipulations entered into between him and the British Indian Government, under date the 1st June, 1818, would be continued to your Memorialist and his other adopted sons. But to this day the Government of the North Western Provinces have declined to make any provision whatever for your Memorialist and the rest of the large family of the Peishwa; and the Supreme Government though appealed to on the subject, have not responded to that appeal, but have contented themselves with directing that the subject should be brought before them through the medium of the Subordinate Government. The course pursued by the local Governments is not only an unfeeling one towards the numerous family of the deceased prince, left almost entirely dependent upon the promises of the East India Company, but inconsistent with what is due to the representative of a long line of sovereigns. Your Memorialist therefore deems it expedient at once to appeal to your Honorable Court not merely on the ground of the faith of treaties but

of a bare regard to the advantages the East India Company have derived from the last sovereign of the Mahratta Empire, and your Memorialist for that purpose begs to annex a copy of the Memorial addressed to the Most Noble the Governor General of India and forwarded through the Government of the North Western Provinces.

2. That your Memorialist would fain believe that the determination to withhold the pension granted by a solemn pact, has been arrived at without due consideration of the terms guaranteed by the Company. It would be contrary to the spirit of all treaties hitherto concluded to attach a special meaning to one article of the stipulations entered into, whilst another is interpreted and acted upon in its most liberal sense. Thus Art. XIV of the treaty of the 13th June, 1817 stipulates that His Highness Rao Pundit Purdhan Bahadoor for himself and for his heirs and successors, hereby cedes to the Honorable the East India Company all his rights and territories in Malwa, which were secured to him by the 11th Article of the treaty . . . . ., and generally all rights and pretensions of every denomination, which he may possess in the country to the north of the river Nurbudda, etc. By this treaty he ceded to the British Government territories yielding an annual revenue of Thirty four Lacs of Rupees. Now as the British Government were particularly guarded to render the cessation of these territories binding upon His Highness the late Bajee Rao as well as his heirs and successors and in consideration of such cessation allowed him a pension of Eight Lacs of Rupees per annum, it surely could never have been intended that he should give up and forsake on behalf of himself and his heirs and descendants all and every claim to a perpetual revenue of Thirty four Lacs capable of considerable increase for a pension of less than one fourth of the above, to be merely drawn during the time of his own natural life. Moreover the pension had not been bestowed upon His Highness the late Bajee Rao as a sort of free gift on the part of the British Government, but in virtue of a subsequent formally entered into and ratified treaty, according to which the British Government were put in possession of a large annual revenue, a small portion only of which was paid to His Highness in the shape of a pension for the support of himself and family. Your Memorialist therefore submits that the cessation of a perpetual revenue of Thirty four Lacs of Rupees in consideration of an annual pension of Eight Lacs of Rupees establishes a *de facto* presumption that the payment of one is contingent upon the receipt of the other, and hence, that as long as those receipts continue, the payment of the pension is to follow. The Peishwa fulfilled all that had been required from him, ceded his dominions to the Company and placed himself and his family in their hands. The Company have in part only performed their engagements by providing for his support during his life, on the legitimate scale fixed by Lord Hastings, but they overlook that part which respects his family. The mention of his family implies a provision for their support after his included the maintenance of his family. Even if there had been no mention of the family in the stipulation as provision for the support of the prince necessarily between the Peishwa and the Company the nature and conditions of the document would supply the omission.

demise. In any other case, such mention was unnecessary.

3. That your Memorialist is at a loss to account for the difference between the treatment, by the Company, of the descendants of other princes and that experienced by the family of the Peishwa, represented by him. The ruler of Mysore evinced the most implacable hostility towards the Company's Government and your Memorialist's father was one of the princes whose aid was evoked by the Company to crush a relentless enemy. When that Chieftain fell, sword in his hand, the Company, far from abandoning his progeny to their fate, have afforded an asylum and a liberal support to more than one generation of his descendants, without distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate. With equal or even greater liberality, the Company delivered the dethroned Emperor of Delhi from a dungeon, reinvested him with the insignia of sovereignty, and assigned to him a munificent revenue which is continued to his descendants to the present day. Wherein is your Memorialist's case different? It is true that the Peishwa after years of amity with the British Indian Government, during which he assigned to them territorial revenues to the amount of half a Crore of Rupees, was unhappily engaged in war with them, by which he perilled his throne. But as he was not reduced to extremities and, even if reduced, closed with the terms proposed to him by the British Commander, and ceded his rich domains to place himself and his family under the fostering care of the Company; and as the Company still profit by the revenues of his hereditary possessions, on what principle are his descendants deprived of the pension included in those terms and the vestiges of sovereignty? Wherein are the claims of his family to the favour and consideration of the Company less than those of the descendants of the conquered Mysorean or the captive Mogul?

4. That your Memorialist claims the continuance of the stipulated pension both for the family of the Peishwa and for himself as the representative of that prince. Your Honorable Court is probably aware that the Peishwa has left a family who are entitled to a suitable support as such from the Company on the terms of the stipulation, and that he adopted under the injunctions of the Hindoo law, three sons of whom your Memorialist is the eldest, and as such as well as by the Will of the Peishwa his successor to his dignity and rights. Your Memorialist cannot suppose that either the local Governments, or your Honorable Court are ignorant that, by the Hindoo law, the adopted son in no respect differs from the natural son. But if any doubt exists, your Memorialist begs leave to refer to the authority of Mr. Sutherland. The religious ordinances of the Hindoos (he remarks) inculcate the indispensable necessity that a man should be survived by a male offspring for performing his exequial rites and other purposes. In consequence, on defect of real legitimate issue, the affiliation, under prescribed rules, of a Kinsman, or other person, is enjoined; and an individual, thus regularly adopted acquires the filial rights which attach to the real son. "The adopted son," to use the words of Sir William MaCnaughten, another distinguished writer on the Hindoo law, "is to all intents and purposes a member of the family of his adopting father, and he succeeds to his property, collaterally as well as lineally."

5. That by the stipulation entered into by the Company with Imrut Rao, the adopted brother of the late Peishwa, by which a provision was guaranteed to him and to his adopted son after him, the Company have acknowledged the adopted son to be on the same footing with the natural son. The same fact is established by the recognition of the adopted sons of numerous sovereign princes, as the rightful heirs of the latter, among whom may be enumerated, as now reigning with the concurrence of the Company:

In Hindoostan

Rajah Jayagee Rao Scindia of Gwalior
Juswant Rao Holkar of Indore

Bhugwunt Bahadoor Singh of Dhoulpore
Rajah Beejoy Singh Bahadoor of Dattya
Rughoojee Bhoosla of Nagpore
Sewaee Bulwunt Singh Bahadoor of Bhurtpore

In the Deccan

Punt Prithee Nidhee of Kruar
Sucheekoo Punt of Bhore
Naik Saheb Neinhalkar of Shultun
Duphla of Jeet *(sic.)*
Rao Sahib Putwurdhun, Janakhundee.

The same fact is evinced in the daily practice of the Company's Courts all over India, in decreeing to the adopted sons of princes and zemindars and persons of every grade, the estates of those parties to the exclusion of other heirs of the blood. Indeed unless the British Indian Government are prepared to abrogate the Hindoo Sacred Code and to interdict the practice of the Hindoo religion of both of which adoption is a fundamental feature, your Memorialist cannot understand with what consistency his claim to the pension of the late Peishwa can be denied merely on the ground of his being an adopted son.

6. That your Memorialist's father, the late Bajee Rao, though fully aware of the respect shown by the British Government to the observance of the precepts of the Shasters, and although fully cognizant that the loyalty and validity of adopting sons according to those precepts had never been drawn into question, His late Highness nevertheless in due deference to the British Government considered it his duty to inform it of his intention and for that reason forwarded in 1844 a communication through the Commissioner to the Supreme Government at Calcutta. Had His late Highness determined upon adopting a son merely for the sake of following the custom of other princes, there would have been no necessity whatever of giving any intimation thereof to the British Government as the full and free exercise of all religious and domestic ceremonies and formalities prescribed by the tenets of the Shasters has been guaranteed to all the natives of the British Empire. It is therefore obvious that in making the Supreme Government cognizant of the step in contemplation, His Highness' object was to obtain the concurrence of the British Government to a measure which according to the precepts of the Shasters, and their recognition on the part of the Government of India, would confer upon the adopted son all those titles, privileges, and emoluments, enjoyed by His Highness, the late Bajee Rao himself up to the time of his decease. The only reply that has been given to this intimation was that the Supreme Government would consider the subject at a proper season, and that resolution had been approved of by the Honorable the Court of Directors. nor was any subsequent notice taken of the subject, until the decease of late Bajee Rao which melancholy event took place on the 28th of January, 1851, since which period the pension, up to that time regularly paid, had at once been discontinued and even the Jagheer of Bithoor was resumed by the British Government. Now your Memorialist humbly submits that the determination of the British Government with regard to the continuance or otherwise of the pension guaranteed by the treaty of the 13th June, 1817, must have been formed long before His Highness the late Bajee Rao's decease, or how could it have happened that the same should have been acted upon the moment his death had been made known to the British Government? If, therefore, the British Government had come to the previous determination of withholding the stipulated allowance to His Highness's successor, it would have been an act of justice towards the late prince to have given him timely notice in order that he might have appealed to your Honorable Court and if necessary laid a true statement of the real merits of the case before Her Britannic Majesty's Government. No such intimation having been given, His Highness was necessarily led to the surmize that the British Government tacitly consented to extend to his successor the privileges which the adoption of a son in accordance with the precepts of the Shasters implies. His Highness was so deeply impressed with this belief that he did not deem it necessary to make any further reference to the British Government, and your Memorialist leaves it to the known justice of the Honorable the Court of Directors to decide whether or not the reply to his first intimation and the subsequent silence on the part of the Government justified the view he had formed on this important subject.

7. That if the withholding of the pension proceeded from the supposition that the late Peishwa had left a sufficient provision for his family it would be altogether foreign to the question, and unprecedented in the annals of the History of British India. The pension of Eight Lacs of Rupees per annum had been agreed upon on the part of the British Government to enable His Highness the late Bajee Rao to support himself and family; it is immaterial to the British Government what portion of that sum the late Prince actually expended, nor has there been any agreement entered into to the effect that His Highness the late Bajee Rao should be compelled to expend every fraction of an annual allowance accorded to him by a special treaty in consideration of his ceding to the British Government territories yielding an annual and perpetual revenue of Thirty four Lacs of Rupees. Nobody on earth had a right to control the expenditure of that pension and if His Highness the late Bajee Rao had saved every fraction of it, he would have been perfectly justified in doing so. Your Memorialist would venture to ask, whether the British Government ever deign to enquire in what manner the pension granted to any of its numerous retired servants is expended, or whether any of them saves a portion and what portion of his pension, and further more whether in the event of it being proved that the incumbents of such pensions had saved a large portion thereof, it would be considered a sufficient reason for withholding the pension from the children in the proportions stipulated by the covenant entered into with its servant. And yet is a native prince, the descendant of an ancient scion of Royalty who relies upon the justice and liberality of the British Government, deserving of less consideration than its covenanted servants? To disperse however any erroneous impression that may exist on the part of the British Government on that score, your Memorialist would respectfully beg to observe that the pension of Eight Lacs of Rupees stipulated for by the treaty of 1817, was not exclusively for the support of His Highness the late Bajee Rao and his family, but also for the maintenance of a large retinue of faithful adherents who preferred following the Ex-Peishwa in his voluntary exile. Their large number, fully known to the British Government, caused a no inconsiderable call upon the reduced resources of His Highness and further more if it be taken into consideration the appearance which native Princes, though rendered powerless, are still obliged to keep up to ensure respect, it may be easily imagined that the savings from a pension of Eight Lacs of Rupees, granted out of an Annual Revenue of Thirty four Lacs, could not have been large. But notwithstanding this heavy call upon the limited resources of the late Peshwa

His Highness husbanded his resources with much care; so as to be enabled to convert a portion of his annual income in public securities, which at the time of his death yielded an income of about Rs.80,000. Is then the foresight and the economy on the part of His Highness the late Bajee Rao to be regarded as an offence deserving to be visited with the punishment of stopping the pension for the support of his family guaranteed by a formal treaty?

8. That your Memorialist on the 24th of June, 1851, submitted a memorial explaining his position and several other circumstances connected therewith, through the Commissioner to the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces and that he was informed that His Honor had determined on the 3rd October last that the pension could not be continued but that the Jagheer may be held by your Memorialist for life free of rent. Your Memorialist would here beg to observe that as he cannot be considered as placed under the direct orders of the Lieutenant Governor of the North Western Provinces, he must presume that the orders have been passed under instruction from the Supreme Government of India. If so, this concession on the part of the Supreme Government must be construed into an admission of the justice of your Memorialist's claim upon the British Government. If the claims of your Memorialist were deserving of no consideration, there was no cause for continuing to him for life the Jagheer rent-free; if on the other hand his claims were founded on data and facts which in the eye of the law would be admitted as at least *prima facie* evidence in his favour, the continuation of the Jagheer alone could not be expected to compensate for the loss of the pension.

9. That your Memorialist having now more fully explained the nature of his claims and the grounds upon which they are based, fully relies on the generosity and liberality of your Honorable Court which he feels confident after a consideration of all the circumstances of the case will not withhold its support from your Memorialist, who without some adequate allowance is wholly unable to uphold the dignity of his family and to support those now wholly dependent upon him.

10. That your Memorialist considering his present reduced circumstances is willing to come to any equitable settlement with the British Government regarding his claims, with a view of speedily adjusting them and that your Memorialist is prepared to treat with the utmost liberality consistent with the nature of his unfortunate position and those dependent upon him.

Your Memorialist being plunged in extreme pecuniary embarrassments by the measures which have been pursued towards him by the local Governments, has empowered his minister to forward on his behalf this Memorial to your Hon'ble Court and he solicits the early consideration to the subject with a view to the issue of orders to this country for the continuance first of a pension to him and his successors ,and secondly of the territory of Bithoor in its present relations.

The above memorial was submitted to the Court of Directors through the Government of India to whom the following letter was addressed :

To

C. Allen Esq.,

Acting Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

Sir,

Seeing but little prospect of an immediate settlement of the claim of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb to the pension stipulated to the late Maharajah Bajee Rao Peishwa, and being alive to the great distress experienced by my master in consequence, I beg that you will obtain the permission of the Most Noble the Governor General of India in Council to forward to the Honorable the Court of Directors, by the earliest opportunities, the accompanying memorial to them in triplicate.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,

(Sd.) (ILLEGIBLE),

Minister of Maharajah
Sreemunt Dhoudoo Punt
Nana Saheb.

ANNEXURE III

(Referred to at page 146)

Nana Saheb's Memorial to the Governor General regarding succession to Baji Rao's Title and Seal

To

The Most Noble the Governor General of India in Council in the Foreign Department.

The humble Memorial of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb, son and heir of the late Maharajah Bajee Rao, Peishwa Punt Purdhan Bahadoor.

Sheweth,

That your Memorialist is deeply grieved by a letter of his agent Jwala Pershad Sahib, which solicited permission to use badges with a certain inscription, being returned from the Foreign Office with an Office Memorandum, to the effect that "the Governor General in Council recognised no such person as Maharajah Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb".

That your Memorialist does not understand the cause of the letter in question having been returned, as he is not aware that his Agent has been guilty of any disrespect towards your Lordship in Council, because the title of Maharajah, which is applicable to your Memorialist by the rules of Oriental Etiquette, was set forth in several former references to the same department by his late Agent Raja Peerajee Rao, without any

objection having been taken thereto. On the contrary it was presumable, from the circumstances of their having been forwarded to the Honorable the Court of Directors without remark, that they were according to rule. But if any circumstance in the address of the present Agent was displeasing to your Lordship in Council your Memorialist submits that it should have been attributed to his not being conversant with the form of official correspondence, and to no other cause, and on the objectionable matter or form being pointed out to him, he would have promptly conformed to any directions regarding it which he might have received from the Secretary's Office.

3. That your Memorialist begs leave to state that the reference in question was dictated by a natural desire on his part to do nothing inconsistent with his humble situation as a dependent upon the British Government; and he therefore considered it to be incumbent on him to apply for the permission of your Lordship in Council to use badges for his personal attendants, with a suitable inscription thereon adopted to show both to the public officers and private persons that he had received such permission.

4. That your Memorialist is not apprised that your Lordship in Council has any objection to his using the titles and which are given to him by the custom of the country, and employed by him accordingly as the representative of a succession of sovereigns. As the supreme and executive authority of the Mahratta powers (it is well known to your Lordship in Council) Balajee Vishwanath Peishwa left his dominions to his son, Bajee Rao First, who was succeeded by his son Balajee Bajee Rao who was succeeded by his sons Madho Rao and Narain Rao in succession, the latter being succeeded by his son Sevayee Madho Rao. On that prince dying without issue, he was succeeded by Bajee Rao, the eldest great grandson of the first Peishwa, and your Memorialist's father, who ultimately resigned his possessions to the East India Company for a stipulated pecuniary provision for himself and his heirs. That provision has not been continued by your Lordship's Government to your Memorialist, the heir and representative of the Peishwa (though he still entertains expectations of receiving justice from the British authorities), but your Lordship in Council cannot (he believes) feel dissatisfaction at his making use of the title, which in Oriental countries as well as in the West, is given to the descendants and representatives of sovereign princes, even after they have abdicated the throne of their fathers.

5. Your Memorialist acknowledges that his title is not derived from the British Government, nor yet from the Emperor of Delhi, from whom the East India Company acquired the sovereignty over a portion of Hindoostan. The Peishwas owed their dominions and greatness to their own enterprise, and they have left to your Memorialist, the last of the race, an empty title, the assumption of which, in conformity to the usages of nations, to the exclusion of all political pretensions, and solely as a distinction of rank and descent, cannot, he presumes to think, be displeasing to the present rulers of India.

6. Under these circumstances, your Memorialist ventures to hope that your Lordship in Council will deign to look upon his humble situation with the eye of benignity, and afford him such marks of their kindness and consideration as they are wont to bestow on other unfortunate princes. Such acts of liberality, while they will cost your Lordship in Council nothing, will be to him a source of consolation in his misfortune.

And your Memorialist will ever pray for the prosperity of the British Government.

(Sd.) ज्वाला प्रसाद

Agent of Maharajah Sreemunt Dhoondoo Punt Nana Saheb.

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter,
With some pain is fraught :
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

--SHELLEY.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE EARLIER MUTINIES

A. VERDICT ON INDIANS.

B. EARLIER MUTINIES :

MUTINY AT VELLORE.

THE BARRACKPUR MUTINY

OTHER MUTINIES IN BENGAL AND MADRAS.

C. GENERAL CAUSES.

D. VERDICT AGAIN.

ANNEXURE : SANAD TO CHET SINGH'S DESCENDANT.

"A country's struggle for freedom begins from the moment her freedom is lost."

—DR. BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY

A. VERDICT ON INDIANS

In dealing with the character of British rule in India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his *Discovery of India* has observed : "India as a nation and Indians as individuals were subjected to insult, humiliation and contemptuous treatment . . . . As an Indian I am ashamed to write all this for the memory of it hurts, and what hurts still more is the fact that we submitted so long to this degradation. I would have preferred any kind of resistance to this, whatever the consequences, rather than that our people should endure this treatment". It is submitted with great respect to the distinguished statesman and learned author that it is not correct to say that Indians submitted, for any period of time, to the 'degradation' to which he refers. There had been constant opposition to British authority from the very beginning. We have the case of Maharaja Nand Kumar of Bengal who paid the penalty of his life in resisting Warren Hastings. He fought a fearless battle against the powerful Governor-General in his own Council where he accused Hastings of bribery and misdemeanour. We have the case of Maharaja Chet Singh of Varanasi who resisted the diplomacy of the East India Company and the threat of his own arrest by Warren Hastings.* It was only through a

*In memory of Maharaja Chet Singh the Uttar Pradesh Government granted a sanad and a token monetary award to Kunwar Vishwanath Singh, a descendant of the Maharaja, at a special ceremony at Varanasi on the Independence Day, 1957. The sanad is reproduced in the Annexure to this chapter.

miracle that Hastings' life was saved when the Maharaja's soldiers attacked the Governor-General's troops. There are other instances too numerous to mention.

In this context it is also relevant to mention that it was due to the open hostility and frequent rebellions on the part of the Indian people that the Governor-General had to pass in 1804 a Regulation providing for the declaration of martial law every now and then (Regulation III of 1804).

There was also the mutiny at Vellore in 1806 and the mutiny at Barrackpur in 1824. These earlier mutinies were to some extent symptoms of the great 'mutiny' of 1857. One common cause of the mutinies of Vellore and of 1857 was the belief of the Indian sepoys that the British were out to deprive them of the religion of their ancestors. And strange, as it may seem, the mutiny at Vellore was, as in 1857, preceded by the distribution of *chapatis*. These earlier mutinies were a sort of fore-warning to the unprecedented uprising of 1857. And had the British in their wisdom learnt the lessons of the earlier cases, '1857' would not possibly have occurred in that form. It would thus be of some interest to give a brief account of the earlier mutinies.

B. EARLIER MUTINIES

VELLORE MUTINY

Vellore is situated at a distance of 80 miles from Madras. The fort there was garrisoned by British and Indian troops. In that fort were also living, in the protective custody of the British, two sons of Tipoo Sultan and the other members of his family. They had been placed there after the battle of Seringapatam at which the brave Sultan fell fighting at the head of his troops. The British had kept the Sultan's sons there in order to prevent them from doing any harm to the Company's Government. They had of course their own separate apartments, and the necessary facilities as State prisoners had been provided to them.

It was at this fort that the sepoys rose in arms on the midnight between July 9 and 10, 1806, and killed many officers and soldiers.

The immediate cause of the revolt was an order issued by the Madras Army Headquarters to the effect that the soldiers at parade shall not appear with their caste marks on their faces, that they shall not grow beards or flourish their moustaches. Thus ran the order :

"It is ordered by the Regulations that a native soldier shall not mark his face to denote his caste, or wear earrings when dressed in his uniform.

"And it is further directed that at all parades and upon all duties every soldier of the battalion shall be clean-shaved on the chin.

"It is directed also that uniformity, as far as is practicable, be preserved in regard to the quantity and shape of the hair upon the upper lip."

These Regulations were applicable only to the Madras Army—in the case of the Armies of Bengal and Bombay their Commanders had seen no need for such an order. This regulating order had been passed in a somewhat rash way without consulting the Indian officers (who would have advised against the issuance of such regulations), although the sanction of the Madras Governor, Lord William Bentinck, and the Commander-in-Chief had been obtained. The sepoys, seeing the other activities of the British, were already apprehensive about the intentions of Government in regard to their freedom of religion. These regulations strengthened their fear that the British were determined to destroy their religion and make them Christians.

At 2 o'clock on the night in question, the sepoys assembled at the main guard of the fort and surrounded the residence of the Commanding Officer who was awakened by a loud firing. He came out and, in his exertions to quiet the disturbance, was mortally wounded. For some hours the fort

was in the possession of the insurgents. In the meanwhile, news was carried to Col. Gillespie, who was in command of a cavalry at nearby Arcot, and who hastened to the relief of the fort. He was soon able to put down the mutineers whose leaders were subjected to very severe punishments. During the night the sepoys had killed 30 of their European officers and over 80 British soldiers.

A Commission of Enquiry consisting of civil and military officers was appointed to enquire into the causes of this mutiny. The civil officers attributed it to the regulations already quoted and to certain military measures of a similar nature. But the military members regarded it as a conspiracy in favour of the sons of Tipoo Sultan who were, for that reason, removed from Vellore to Bengal. The conclusion of the whole Commission, however, was that the earlier instructions about the head-dress* of the sepoys and the new regulations regarding their appearance on parade were the leading causes of the insurrection.

The mutiny created a great sensation in England. The authorities of the East India Company relieved Lord William Bentinck of the Governorship of Madras, removed the Commander-in-Chief, and replaced Sir George Barlow, the Governor-General (who was expecting to be soon confirmed in that office), by Lord Minto.

Lord Minto lost no time in removing the impression that the authorities meant to interfere with the religion or the customs of the sepoys or of the people. To him belongs the credit for discouraging the 'invasion' of India by Christian missionaries. In a letter of September, 1807, he wrote to the Chairman of the East India Company: "The only successful engine of sedition in any part of India must be that of persuading the people that our Government entertains hostile and systematic designs against their religion".

Lady Minto, in her work on Lord Minto in India, writes thus regarding the many books printed in Indian languages by the Christian Mission at Serampur: "Soon after Lord Minto's arrival some of these publications attracted the attention of the Government and, it being undenied that they were quoted to offend the feelings of the native population, containing, as they did, offensive attacks on Hindu mythology and the Muslim Prophet, the Secretary to the Governor-General received instructions to communicate to the Rev. Dr. Carey, the leading member of the Mission at Serampur, a resolution arrived at by the Governor-General in Council to place their press under regulations and to suspend the practice of public preaching by the natives† in the native dialects at the seat of Government."

In the instructions referred to in the above quotation the Government of India had expressed strong disapproval to the preaching of that kind, and had drawn attention to the expressed pledge of the British Government "to leave the native subjects of the Company to the full, free and undisturbed exercise of their respective religions."‡

The people of India followed their religion more than anything else. Lord Minto's directions to the Christian missionaries thus reconciliated them to the Company's Government.

THE BARRACKPUR MUTINY

Eighteen years after the Vellore mutiny, a mutiny took place in the Bengal Army in 1824. In that year war had broken out

*The leather cockade for the turban of sepoys had been introduced by the earlier regulations. Hindus would not put any kind of leather over their heads and would never touch cow's hide of which the cockade was supposed to be made. Muslim sepoys also objected to it thinking that it was made of pig-skin, a polluting substance in their eyes.

†This refers to "native Christians".

‡*Minto in India*, page 65.

between the British Government and Burma. The troops of the Madras Army had been sent to Rangoon by sea and the 47th Native Regiment of the Bengal Army stationed at Barrackpur, near Calcutta, was also ordered to proceed to Burma by sea. To this the Hindu sepoys objected on the ground that one of the conditions of their enlistment was that they would not be required to cross the sea. Their further objection was that they would lose their caste if they set their feet on a steamer—a consequence which they would not suffer under any circumstances. It was then proposed that they would go by the land route, but rumour was spread that after marching on land up to Chittagong they would be forcibly required to proceed by sea. In addition, there was also the difficulty about carts and bullocks needed to carry their kit. The Government themselves had not been able to make transport arrangements, because no animals were available far and wide at any price. Nevertheless, the sepoys were told to find their own transport.

Earlier, the sepoys had submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Edward Paget, a memorial setting out their grievance in their own faltering but effective language full of sincerity. It ran : "The case of this. The soubahdar major and havildar major told the sepoys & Co., they were going to Rangoon and would be embarked on boardship, and he told all the sepoys that when the Company went to war they ought not to shrink. After this, the soubahdar major and havildar major sent for four men from each company, and said, 'those who wear the *takee khoo* ought not to cast it off. This also they ought not to do'. The sepoys replied that they never could put their feet on boardship, and that no person would forfeit his caste. For this reason all the sepoys swore by the Ganges water and *toolsee* that they never would put their feet in a ship ; and every gentleman knows that when a Hindu takes Ganges water and *toolsee* in his hand, he will sacrifice his life. In this way the regiment & Co. pledged themselves. This which is written is our representation. And further, the soubahdar and havildar before mentioned went to the Commanding Officer, Colonel Cartwright, and stated that the regiment was ready to march ; that all the sepoys had agreed (to march), whereas the sepoys knew nothing of this circumstance. Now, you are master of our lives ; what you order we will do ; but we will not go on boardship, nor will we march for that purpose. Formerly our name was good, but it has now become bad ; our wish is, therefore, that our names be effaced, and that every man may return to his home."

This representation was given no serious consideration by the Commander-in-Chief or his staff. On the other hand, the Commander-in-Chief marched in person to Barrackpur to see that the regiment obeyed orders, however unreasonable the orders were and however well-founded were their objections on the ground of caste. The regiment was ordered to assemble at parade and, when that was done, the Commander-in-Chief told them that they had the alternative either of proceeding to the front or laying down their arms. The sepoys placed their religion above everything else and would not burke any sacrifice to save their caste. They did not obey the Commander-in-Chief's order although they did not intend to offer any armed resistance. Thereupon, two European regiments, which had also been drilled on the parade and behind which guns had been hidden, were ordered to open fire tearing the sepoys to pieces by grape and musketry. As the sepoys had been contemplating no attack on the Europeans they had not even loaded their muskets. Kaye has describes the massacre in his own graphic words : "Sir Edward Paget was a man of the very metal to tread down insurrection with an iron heel regardless both of causes and consequences. . . . Some attempt was made at explanation, some attempt at conciliation, but it was feeble and indifferent ; perhaps not understood. They (the sepoys) were told then that they

must consent to march or to ground their arms. Still not seeing the danger, for they were not told that the artillery guns were loaded with grape and the gunners ready to fire (it is doubtful, indeed, whether they knew that the guns were in the rear of the European regiments), they refused to obey the word ; and so the signal for slaughter was given. The guns opened upon them. The mutineers were soon in panic flight. Throwing away their arms and accoutrements, they made for the river. Some were shot down, some were drowned. There was no attempt at battle. None had been contemplated. The muskets, with which the ground was strewn, were found to be unloaded."*

Those who escaped instant death were captured and court-martialled. Many were hanged. The name of the regiment was afterwards struck out of the Army List.

Such was the result of the Barrackpur mutiny. It forms one of the darkest chapters in the history of the British rule in India. Mr. Herbert Spencer condemned the massacre in these words : "Down to our own day continues the cunning despotism which uses native soldiers to maintain and extend native subjects—a despotism under which, not many years since, a regiment of sepoys was deliberately massacred for refusing to march without proper clothing."

OTHER MUTINIES

Bengal Army

A mutiny took place in the Company's troops with the Nawab of Avadh in 1764. In 1782 the 25th Regiment of the Bengal Army refused to obey orders whereupon the leaders were punished and the regiment disbanded. A serious mutiny took place in 1825 in the 47th Bengal Native Infantry. There was much bloodshed and severe punishments. Their regiment was also disbanded. This was followed in 1844 by the mutiny of the 34th Native Infantry. It occurred when the regiment was ordered for service in Sindh, but for several reasons the sepoys refused to march. The regiment was disbanded.

Madras Army

Prior to the mutiny at Vellore, several other mutinies had taken place in the Madras Army. The first of these was in December 1780 at Tellichery. Of the leaders, one was punished by being blown off from a gun, and on two others one thousand lashes each were inflicted in the presence of all the troops. There was a serious mutiny at Vizagapatam which also took place in the same year and in which several European officers were killed—more would have been killed had they not fled and hid themselves in various places. The mutineers then plundered the cantonment and thereafter marched off to Hyderabad to join service under the opponents of the British.

There was again a mutiny in 1786 when several battalions rose in arms following the non-payment of the arrears of their pay. It was usual in the early days of the Company's Government to keep Indian sepoys in arrears while the British soldiers were almost always paid up-to-date. The excuse was want of funds in the Company's treasuries. But this was not acceptable to the sepoys because they could see that money was somehow forthcoming for disbursement to the British troops. The sepoys bore the resulting hardships feeding themselves by selling their belongings. It was only when they were driven to desperation that they rose. Ultimately they were pacified by payment having been made through a loan raised specifically for the purpose.

Clear orders of the Court of Directors existed to the effect that the pay of soldiers ought never be in arrears while there was a single rupee in the treasury, that the soldiers must

*Kaye, *History of the Sepoy War*, Volume I, pages 268-69.

be paid in preference to any other article of expenditure. But these instructions were now and then ignored leading to several other mutinies.

Another mutiny occurred, this time at Gantoor in 1797. On this occasion the sepoys refused to obey the orders for march—orders which had been given with a view to the incorporation of these sepoys in a new regiment under a re-organisation scheme. The leaders were punished.

C. GENERAL CAUSES

A British officer, who had retired 25 years prior to the revolt of 1857 and who knew the Bengal Army well, asserted that all mutinies were caused by some injustice or breach of faith on the part of the Government. "Almost all the mutinies of India, whether in Bengal or elsewhere, have been more or less produced, or at least have had some sort of initiative, from ourselves. There has usually been some departure from contract, some disregard of the feelings, health or convenience of the native soldiers, when at the same moment the utmost care was lavished on a European regiment; some unwise tampering with their religious views or prejudices; some interference with their pay or rights, or what they supposed to be their rights."*

The lesson drawn from the earlier mutinies of the Bengal and the Madras Armies is that though the sepoys were loyal† and would put up with hardships, they had the guts to rise in arms notwithstanding the severe punishments of shooting, hanging, life transportation and flogging—which were meted out to the mutineers. Principles came to be violated, including inroads into religious practices and forced compliance with unreasonable orders. The humble sepoy always took courage and rose, facing the consequences of failure about which he had little doubt.

Good discipline of Bombay Army

Contrary to what happened from time to time in the Bengal and the Madras Armies, the Bombay Army had almost a clear record. There had been only one or two incidents of disobedience of orders, but no serious mutinies had taken place. Even in 1857, the Bombay regiments not only did not mutiny, but took active part in suppressing the uprising in the Bengal Army. This was because the Bombay Army had all along been treated on a preferential footing in the matter of salary and allowances and other conveniences. Further, there was good management within its ranks. Promotions were available for higher ranks and merit was the criterion for advancement. Persons belonging to the scheduled castes were also enlisted and promoted to higher ranks. There was always a co-operative spirit between man and man on the one hand and the sepoys and their officers on the other. Officers were considerate, exercising restraint in imposing their authority. All this brought about a much superior level of discipline and management in the Bombay Army than was possible in the regiments of Bengal or Madras.

*The Mutiny in Bengal Army, p. 4.

†"It is worthy of remark that while the British soldiers were always paid up-to-date or nearly so, the 'native' army, serving alien masters, was kept constantly in arrears for several consecutive years, notwithstanding which, and the extreme severity of the service, it steadily resisted, with few exceptions, the numerous offers conveyed by the emissaries of Hyder and Tipoo. Such fidelity, under similar circumstances, is without parallel in the military history of any nation"—Col. Wilson in the *History of the Madras Army*.

D. VERDICT AGAIN

In these circumstances it would not be fair to say that our own countrymen long submitted to degradation at the hands of the British rulers. Weak though they were in physical might, they offered resistance irrespective of the consequences. In this connection it is relevant to refer to the view which Pandit Nehru has, in another part of his book, expressed in contradiction of the view quoted in the beginning of this chapter. After quoting the poet's verse :

"The East bowed low before the blast
    In patient, deep disdain ;
She let the legions thunder past,
    And plunged in thought again."

the learned author thus comments on it : "But it is not true that India has ever bowed patiently before the blast or been indifferent to the passage of foreign legions. Always she has resisted them, often successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, and even when she failed for the time being, she remembered and prepared herself for the next attempt. . . . She resisted, with considerable success, Alexander's legions and immediately after his death drove out the Greek garrisons in the north . . . . She fought the Huns for generations and drove them out."

Pt. Nehru then goes on to deal with other foreign invasions and ultimately, coming to the British period, again observes : "The British triumphed, but hardly had they established themselves in the North when the great Mutiny broke out and developed into a war of independence, and nearly put an end to British rule. The urge to freedom, to independence, has always been there, and the refusal to submit to alien domination."

We have then several instances of civil rebellion against British authority, for example the Bareilly rising of 1816, the Cole out-break of 1831-32 and risings in Chhota Nagpur and Palamau. Then again, Bengal saw the Firazee disturbances, Malabar the Moplah outbreaks and in Bihar there was the Santhal insurrection. All these were ruthlessly suppressed by the powerful army of the British. But what the army could not suppress was the spirit of India.

There are also the cases of young men of Bengal taking to terrorism against the injustice of the British rule in Bengal, particularly during the period following the partition of Bengal. There is here no intention to defend the murders committed by youths burning with the fire of patriotism ; the point is that, irrespective of the consequences, Indians did defy British authority. Khudi Ram Bose knew well that he could not escape from the clutches of the C. I. D., even so he did not hesitate to throw a bomb to register the country's protest against what he considered to be a high-handed action, nor did he hesitate to sacrifice his life in defence of the self-respect of the nation.

Finally, there came the "movements" of Mahatma Gandhi, demonstrating beyond doubt that the spirit of our men and women could not be crushed by lathis or bayonets or by any form of repression, and that our countrymen knew well how to suffer for a grand cause.

All this disproves that Indians have taken things lying down, that they did not resist ill-treatment or that they did not rise against insults to their national honour.

ANNEXURE

SANAD GRANTED BY THE UTTAR PRADESH GOVERNMENT TO KUNWAR VISHWANATH SINGH, A DESCENDANT OF MAHARAJA CHET SINGH.

(Referred to in the foot-note at page 154)

स्वाधीनता दिवस समारोह, १९५७

देश में अंग्रेजी सत्ता के विरुद्ध प्रारम्भ से ही संघर्ष होता रहा और उस संघर्ष में अगणित देशभक्तों ने भाग लेकर अपने स्वदेश प्रेम का परिचय दिया। उन्हीं में से एक प्रमुख देशभक्त, वाराणसी के तत्कालीन शासक, महाराजा चेतसिंह थे, जिन्होंने ईस्ट इंडिया कम्पनी की कूटनीति और उसके प्रतिनिधि वारेन हेस्टिंग्ज की नृशंसता का विरोध आज से लगभग पौने दो सौ वर्ष पूर्व किया था।

उन्हीं महाराजा चेतसिंह की पुण्य स्मृति में उत्तर प्रदेश शासन की ओर से उनके वंशज कुंवर विश्वनाथ सिंह को १००१ रुपये, रौप्य थाल, कौशाम्बर, इत्यादि, की सांकेतिक भेंट दी जाती है।

वाराणसी ;
२४ श्रावण, शक संवत् १८७९,
१५ अगस्त, १९५७।

सदानन्द वामन शिवेश्वरकर,
कमिश्नर,
वाराणसी डिवीजन।

The people never give up their liberties but under some delusion — Edmund Burke

Speech at County Meeting of Bucks. 1784

CHAPTER TWELVE

STATE OF ENGLAND NEAR 1857

A. POLITICAL POSITION IN 1857.

B. SOME EARLIER EVENTS.

C. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

D. THE CRIMEAN WAR.

E. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS; ARTS AND SCIENCES.

ANNEXURE : NOTE ON FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

"Preserve with faithful attachment the acquisitions of our forefathers, not tabulating them with vulgar pride, but accepting the legacy with reverence, and holding no sacrifice too great to maintain it. Be sure that in our national character, if we can keep it high and undefiled, still lies our national strength. Count it no shame to acknowledge our imperial mission, but on the contrary the greatest disgrace to be untrue to it, and cling humbly but fervently to the belief that so long as we are worthy we may still remain one of the instruments through whom He chooses to speak to mankind"—LORD CURZON in a speech on *The True Imperialism* delivered at Birmingham in 1907.

A. POLITICAL POSITION IN 1857

Queen Victoria (reigned 1837—1901) was on the throne of England with Lord Palmerston as her Prime Minister in 1857. She had now worn the crown for 20 years. Palmerston, who had previously been Foreign Secretary in an earlier Cabinet, had become Prime Minister in 1855 on the fall of Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet. Aberdeen had forfeited the confidence of the House of Commons because of the losses suffered by British troops in the Crimean War for which he had been held responsible.

With Queen Victoria as the sovereign, England was now a constitutional monarchy in the fullest meaning of that expression. The Crown possessed influence, but not power which rested in the Prime Minister with the country behind him. The Queen was, of course, consulted on all foreign affairs and saw all foreign despatches, but intervened only to avoid mistakes being made. Thus, she made some changes in the Proclamation issued in her name after the Indian rebellion (see Chapter 41), and in 1861 she and the Prince Consort suggested modifications in a despatch to the United States of America. Her long reign had given the Queen much greater experience than that of

her ministers and so her influence was accepted and respected. She acted as a link between the different parts of the empire, and made the Crown, which some of her predecessors, notably George IV (1820—1830), had brought into disrepute by their selfishness and immorality, a popular institution at home and abroad.

Lord Palmerston was aged 70 years when he first* became Prime Minister, but he was full of cheer and confidence, was bold and dashing, not unoften bordering on recklessness in his public life. He was considered the only man likely to finish the Crimean War successfully. His main policy was to assert the honour and the prestige of his nation on all possible occasions.

In relation to the countries of continental Europe, British policy had been somewhat aggressive, and Great Britain was looked upon as a power interfering in the affairs of other nations. But as Britain generally sought to support movements for liberty, her moral prestige was high.

Some nine years before the Indian revolt, the oppressed people of Europe had taken up arms against their rulers. In February, 1848, there was a revolution in Paris and the French King, Louis Philippe, escaped to England where he died two years later. A Republic was established in France and Louis Napoleon, a nephew of the great Napoleon I, was elected its President.† In North Italy, the people rose against the Austrian domination; in Poland against the Russians; in Austria and Hungary against the Habsburgs. Even in Berlin there were riots in favour of a new constitution, and one ruler after another had to fly for his life.

Lord Palmerston, who was then Foreign Secretary in Lord Peel's Cabinet, played a sort of dual game in these revolts—he sympathised with the insurgents and helped them even by having arms sent to them; at the same time, he welcomed as exiles in England many of the fugitive monarchs. Thus, Louis Philippe, King of France, came to end his days in England. The Crown Prince of Prussia also came, but he did not stay long.

These popular revolts did not, however, succeed except for a short time in France. The up-risings were crushed everywhere and the autocratic rulers were re-established. The hopes of democratic government in Europe were thus lost, but Britain gained in prestige on account of its avowed sympathy with popular aspirations in the oppressed countries.

B. SOME EARLIER EVENTS

The Napoleonic wars, in which England had taken prominent part, had caused great discontent and distress in England. With Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815, there began a new era in the history of England. This era, which ran up to 1867, brought about changes in every sphere of life. In foreign matters Britain had now few troubles because, after the fall of Napoleon, all countries were so exhausted that for a while stagnation was visible in every European country. But in England itself important developments took place. There were great changes in industry, and much distress amongst the working classes which led to upheavals because of the failure

*He became Prime Minister a second time in 1859 when 75, dying in 1865, while still holding that office.

†In a *coup d'etat* three years later, Louis Napoleon had all the Republican leaders seized, and sent into exile. He then held a plebiscite which gave him power to re-model the Constitution, and a year later, in 1852, another plebiscite revived the monarchy when Louis became a virtual dictator. It was several years afterwards that the Republic was again established in 1870.

of Government to help the people. Not only that, the Government also took to harsh measures, so repressive as would have caused a revolution had they been launched in any other country. The roots of these troubles were to be found firstly in the distress caused by the wars with Napoleon and secondly in the Industrial Revolution which had started in Britain towards the latter part of the eighteenth century and the effects of which developed early in the nineteenth century.

The post-war trouble consisted of decreased trade and large-scale unemployment caused by the cessation of war production, the demobilised soldiers adding themselves to the crowd of competitors wanting work. Things were aggravated by the invention of machinery and the setting up of factories which meant the use of lesser manpower and consequential unemployment. This was, however, off-set to a certain extent by the construction of roads, railways, ships and factories. But, on the whole, the Industrial Revolution had first created scarcity, and it was only long afterwards that it brought in an era of prosperity.

In this revolution the construction of railways played a major part. Although the first locomotive was made by George Stephenson in 1814, there was much opposition to the laying of railway lines from land-owners who objected to railway traffic across their estates. So, in 1818 Parliament rejected the first Bill for the promotion of a railway. It was only in 1825 that the first railway was opened for traffic and it was not until 1842 that the enterprising Queen Victoria made her first train journey. The laying of railways was carried out at great speed and the land was covered with a network of railway lines linking up almost all the industrial districts by 1850. The Industrial Revolution covered textile industries, steel production, canals, roads, railways and even agriculture and animal husbandry.

The condition of the working classes had, however, gone from bad to worse. They lived in slums ; men, women and children had to work for long hours in factories. The poor people were also in distress due to fluctuations in the price of food, leading to riots and revolts on the part of the population and repression on the part of Government.

In politics, there had been a great upheaval caused by the introduction in Parliament of the famous Reforms Bill in 1831, by Lord Grey, the Prime Minister. The Bill roused great tensions and there were serious riots in many cities, including London. After a great deal of controversy and bitterness, the Bill was passed in 1832. It was then hailed as the panacea for all evils and even children went about shouting, *the Reform Bill has been passed*. The Bill extended the franchise with the result that the monopoly of power possessed by the land-owning aristocracy was broken by giving the vote to the middle classes also. The number of voters was doubled because the franchise, which was previously limited to land-owners, was now extended to house-holders. Still the principle of adult franchise was far away, since under the new law only one person out of every 24 of the whole population had a vote. This was because only the middle classes had been enfranchised ; the working classes had to wait for nearly 40 years more for enfranchisement. The enfranchisement of women came later still.

A reform of world-wide importance had also been completed in 1833 through the efforts of William Wilberforce, one of the most enlightened philanthropists of any age. This was the freedom given to slaves throughout the British dominions. The slave trade (under which men and women, free in their own country, were, for the purpose of making money, caught, sold and transported into slavery) had been abolished by Great Britain in 1807, and later in 1815 other European countries followed the

example. But though the *trade* was prohibited, persons who were already slaves remained so in South Africa and in the British colonies of Jamaica. This was because of an economic difficulty ; the plantation-owners and others could not run their estates profitably if slave-labourers were freed. The situation was, however, met by a Parliamentary grant of a large sum of money as compensation to the owners of slaves and under the Emancipation of the Slaves Act, 1833, all slave-children under six years of age were made free and all children being born after the passing of the Act were also to be free citizens. The rest of the slaves were bound to be 'apprentices' to their masters for a time, receiving wages, but in 1838 they were completely freed in all the British dominions. In India also, the legal recognition of slavery was prohibited in 1843 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Ellenborough.

C. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The British territories in India were being administered in trust for the English Crown by the East India Company. The administration was being done under the Government of India Act, 1833, as amended by the Act of 1853. These enactments had been passed by Parliament to regulate the powers and functions of the Company at home and of the Governor-General and other functionaries in India. The main feature of the former Act was that the Company was prohibited from engaging in trade and commerce, and became merely an agency for administering British Indian territories. The Company was required speedily to close the commercial business by selling off all its merchandise at home and abroad and to clear all debts relating to the commercial branch of its affairs.

The administration under the above Acts was to be carried on by the Governor-General and Councillors, to be styled the Governor-General of India in Council. This body was now given the sole power to legislate for the whole of India in supersession of the right of issuing Regulations possessed by the Presidency Governments of Bengal, Madras and Bombay under earlier charters of Parliament.

The Company at home supervised the affairs of India through the Court of Directors elected by the Court of Proprietors. In order to enable the British Cabinet to have an effective say in Indian matters there existed a body formally known as 'Commissioners for the Affairs of India' and popularly called the Board of Control. It consisted of two Ministers of the Crown, namely the Chancellor of the Exchequer (who was also *ex-officio* the President of the Board) and a Secretary of State and four members of the Privy Council nominated by the Crown. The Commissioners exercised effective supervision over the Directors ; they had access to all papers of the Company and no despatches could be sent without their approval. These Commissioners were also empowered to send urgent or secret orders through a Secret Committee of the Directors. The Board of Control thus virtually exercised supreme authority in all important matters. Till the passing of the Act of 1853, the Directors possessed the power of patronage in appointing and dismissing their own servants, as distinguished from appointments made by, or with the approval of, the Crown, or with the concurrence of the Board of Control. This power was taken away by the Act of 1853 which provided for the holding of competitive examinations for superior recruitments to the civil service.

Further particulars about the East India Company will be found in Chapter 4.

D. THE CRIMEAN WAR

Prior to Lord Palmerston becoming Prime Minister there were party feuds amongst rival statesmen. These had arisen following the dismissal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Secretaryship in Lord John Russell's Cabinet in 1851. The dismissal was the result of the noble Lord's blustering decisions on foreign affairs which he used to take without reference to the Cabinet or the Prime Minister. One of his acts was the message of congratulations which, without consulting the Cabinet or the Queen, he sent to Louis Napoleon (nephew of the Great Napoleon) on his success in overthrowing the Second Republic and making himself dictator of France. France had become a Republic in 1848, and its overthrow had come as a surprise to the English people; so Palmerston was accused of having acted rashly and impolitically in sending the objectionable message. Palmerston had also committed a mistake earlier in having sent the British fleet to seize Greek ships. As a result of an internal affair in Greece, a British subject doing business in Athens was attacked by a mob which racked his house. Having failed to obtain compensation from the Greek Government, he had appealed to Lord Palmerston who had then sent the fleet.

The action of Palmerston on each occasion was erroneous, but he would not accept his mistake. After his dismissal, he decided to take revenge on his former colleagues. He managed to bring about the defeat and resignation of Lord John Russell from the Prime Ministership. The Queen, however, influenced a reconciliation between the warring parties, and in the result a coalition Government was formed under Lord Aberdeen, under whom both Palmerston and Russell, sinking their differences, joined the Cabinet. Russell then became Foreign Secretary and Palmerston Home Secretary. The coalition, however, worked ill-together and landed the country in the Crimean war which British historians regard as the most disastrous episode of the nation.

This war has, to some extent, been said to be a contributory cause of the revolt in India. Its incidents may, therefore, be briefly noticed. The war was begun in 1854 by an attack aimed at capturing Russia's naval port of Sebastapol by an expedition of the French and the British, aided by a small Turkish force. The causes of the war were several, but the one with which we are chiefly concerned was that Great Britain was afraid of Russian influence in the Balkans as threatening the route to India. The British believed that Russia had designs on their Indian empire and that it was in aid of that design that Russia meant to come down into the Mediterranean, thus getting control of the route of the British to India. Russia, on her part, was trying to take advantage of the declining power of the Turkish empire over the Balkan countries. Czar Nicholas I, the Emperor, was in favour of an amicable division of the spoils in the Balkans, he himself getting an access to the Mediterranean, Great Britain taking Egypt and Crete.

The Russian Government purported to act in protection of all the Christian subjects of the Turks. Both Great Britain and France saw that the true motive of Russian policy was to have political control of the Balkans. In England there was then the coalition Government of Lord Aberdeen which, being divided in its views, could give no clear lead to the British Ambassador at Constantinople. In the result, the Czar mistakenly thought that Britain would do nothing and for that reason there was no chance of war. The Russians then occupied certain provinces near the Danube and sank a Turkish Fleet. Britain and France then declared war on Russia. France was not directly affected, but the French King, Napoleon III, wished to raise the prestige of his government and

so he asserted French influence in certain holy places in the Balkans.

The events of the Crimean war are not of interest here, but the war went on badly both for the British and the French. The allied troops suffered terribly during the Russian winter—November, 1854 to March, 1855—and thousands died in miserable conditions, many from wounds, many more by cholera, fever and dysentery, and many from lack of food and clothing. Lord Aberdeen, who was thought to have mismanaged the whole affair, resigned the Prime Ministership making place for Lord Palmerston, who was expected to prosecute the war vigorously. This proved to be so, particularly on account of the death of the Czar Nicholas; his successor Alexander II being ready to negotiate. The peace treaty was signed at Paris in March, 1856.

One of the results of the Crimean war was that British military prestige was greatly undermined, and stories of British sufferings and incompetence in that campaign were rampant in India. This encouraged the discontented sepoys and the civilian elements in India to rise against British authority.

It is interesting to note in passing that the battles fought during the siege of Sebastapol were practically the last episode in the 'old-fashioned' warfare, that is to say before the evolution of modern armies. It was fantastic that smart young women went out to see the operations as though they were going to a picnic.

E. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS; ARTS AND SCIENCES

In the field of economic life the fruits of the Industrial Revolution had begun to be reaped. The doctrine laid down by Adam Smith in his Wealth of Nations (1776) that countries gained by the free exchange of goods, had begun to be applied to England's trade. As a result, duties on goods had been reduced over a period of years and thereafter during Gladstone's Prime Ministership more duties were abolished and Free Trade was made the policy of Great Britain (1860).

Though the country was becoming wealthier, the working classes were still facing hardships for many years. There was much unemployment and a good deal of sweating by hard task masters. Parents, forced by the stress of the times, allowed their children, six or seven years old, to work in factories for ten to fourteen hours a day under terrible conditions. The Factory Act of 1833* brought some relief, but in textile factories alone, by raising the minimum age of employment to nine years, and reducing the period of work to nine hours a day.

In the coal mines conditions were so horrifying that the conscience of Parliament and of the nation was startled on seeing the report of the Royal Commission which had been appointed to investigate the subject. Children under 12 years worked for 16 hours a day. Women and children alike acted as beasts of burden, pulling tubs laden with coal. The cold, the dampness, the foul air and severe labour caused dreadful suffering and ruined the lives, physically and morally, of many of these women and children.† It was then that the Collieries Act was passed in 1842 prohibiting the employment in the underground mines of women and girls, and of boys under ten. Even after this law, boys under 10 years continued to be employed. The owners of mines had declared that they could not run the undertakings at a profit without child labour. They said

*This was the first Act. The second Factory Act, passed in 1846, reduced the working hours to ten for women and persons under 18 years. But as factories largely depended on this class of labour, they could not remain open for longer hours; consequently men also benefited by the shortened period of work.

†New History of Great Britain by R. B. Mowat (Oxford), p. 738 (1920 edition).

that children under eight years did not *pull* the "tubs", but sat opening the doors or "traps" in them.*

Several years before 1857, there had been violent labour riots at many places, the result in one case was, according to the Duke of Wellington, worse than he had ever seen in a captured town. There was also much discontent in the general life of English society due to the high cost of living.

Charters were presented to Parliament seeking reforms, largely political. The last of these charters came in 1848 when political revolutions were taking place in Europe. It was a monster petition backed by large deputations from all over the country and purporting to have been signed by 55 lacs of people.† The Government felt apprehensive, lest a revolution may take place in England also, and elaborate military arrangements were made to check the mammoth procession. But to the good luck of Government a torrential rain scattered the crowds and no trouble arose. The fear of a revolution having now died down the working classes settled down to find an outlet for their energies in *Trade Unionism* and *Co-operation.* From 1848 onwards the energies of the nation were directed towards achieving prosperity and everything began to expand. Railways were being built and steamships developed ; many companies were floated to exploit the inventions which gave impetus to production. Capital was in great demand and the rate of interest rose to 20 per cent.

The middle classes now grew more prosperous with the nation's general prosperity which was witnessed in the Great Exhibition held in London in 1851. It was an unique show, for the exhibition was housed in a large building made entirely of glass with iron girders and pillars. For this reason it was given the name of *Crystal Palace.* Even tall trees were enclosed within its glass structure. It was sponsored, planned and organised by the Prince Consort who rightly believed that art and commerce made people understand each other better and that, by becoming prosperous through commerce and refined through art, people would come to live at peace with one another. The exhibition was opened by Queen Victoria in May, 1851, and lasted till October. People from the Continent also flocked to visit it. The English people rejoiced in the wealth which the exhibition displayed.

Great Britain had trouble also in Ireland which was then being ruled by the British Cabinet through the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was a member of the Cabinet, and acted as a sort of Viceroy in relation to Irish affairs. In 1846, a great famine overtook Ireland as a result of the total failure in 1845 of the crop of potatoes, the staple food of the people who were then very poor. Nearly 3,000 persons were dying each week in work-houses alone. England could send no corn because her own crops had been ruined by rain, and corn could not be imported because of the ban imposed by Corn Laws. For a long time, agitation had been going on in England for the repeal of these laws, but the land-owning classes were against it, thinking that the repeal would ruin the agriculture and injure the country. Eventually, however, the repeal was carried into effect in 1846 by Lord Peel's Government. But the sufferings of the Irish people were not substantially mitigated. In the four years, 1845—49, the population of the country decreased through deaths and emigration by 17 lakhs (from 83 lakhs to 66 lakhs).

Arts and Sciences

In literature, art, science and industry the English nation had taken great strides towards the middle of the eighteenth century. Among the poets it had produced Tennyson,

*The New Groundwork of British History by George Warner, Marten and Muir, p. 782, 1943 edition.
†On later examination of the signatures, many were found to be forged.



QUEEN VICTORIA

[illegible]

"Besides, it strikes the Queen that [illegible] Indian Princes whom we [illegible] the more consideration we show for their birth and [illegible] grandeur, the more we shall attach Indian Princes to Government [illegible] the more [illegible] will [illegible] come under our rule." *The Queen to Lord Dalhousie, [illegible] October, 185[illegible]*



VISCOUNT PALMERSTON

(The Queen's Prime Minister during the Indian 'Mutiny')

'It would be a proper thing that a day should be set apart for National Prayer and Humiliation with reference to the present calamitous state of affairs in India, and should your Majesty approve, Viscount Palmerston would communicate on the subject with the Archbishop of Canterbury.' *Palmerston to the Queen, 10th September, 1857.* (The Queen sanctioned the proposal with the significant modification that it should be called 'a day of prayer and intercession for our suffering countrymen,' than of fast and humiliation.)

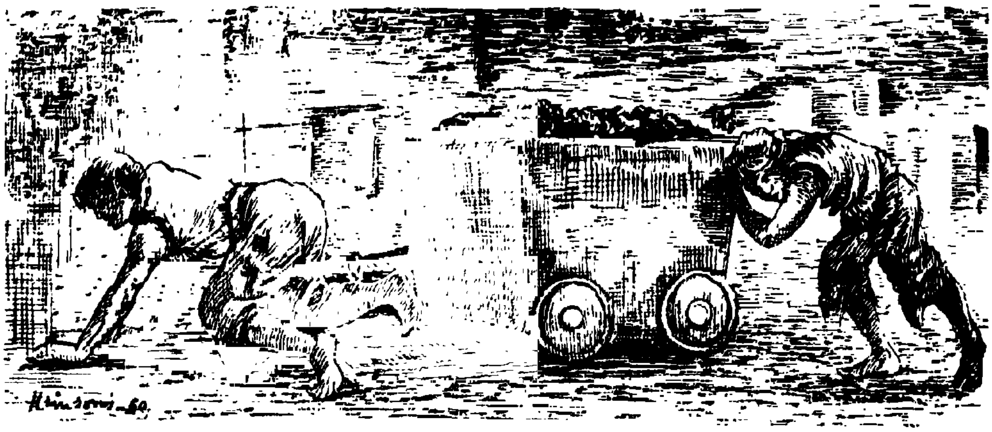


THE LADY OF THE LAMP

[From the statue by Arthur Walker in Waterloo Place, London]

It is an irony that Florence Nightingale, the talented and saintly woman, who dedicated her long life to the alleviation of the sufferings of the sick and the wounded, received no proper recognition from her countrymen. It was only when she had grown old, and had lost all knowledge of what went around her, that the ORDER OF MERIT was bestowed upon her.

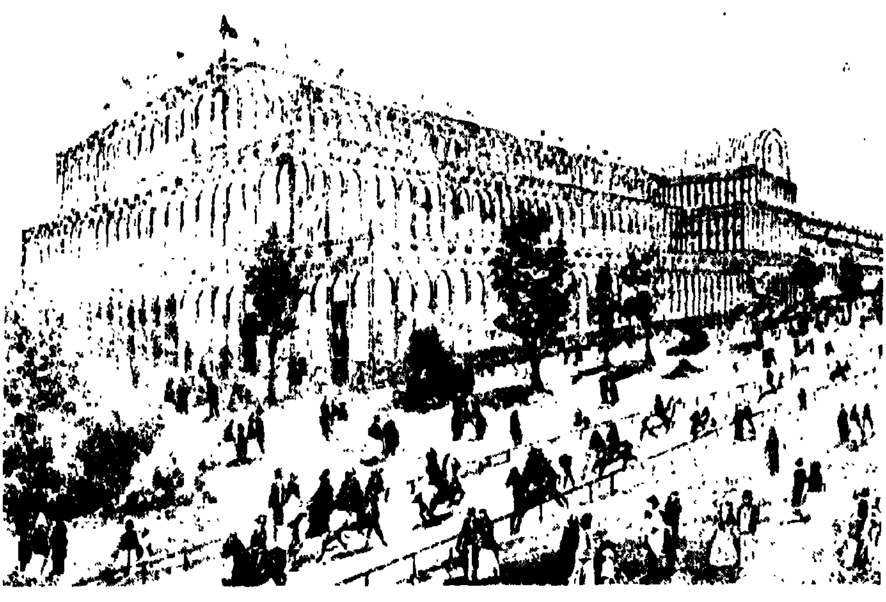
As she lay senile, the decoration was pinned to her breast. It is doubtful whether she understood the ceremony though her feeble voice was heard to say: "Too kind, too kind."



CONDITIONS IN ENGLISH COAL MINES, 1842

(From the Report of the Royal Commission)

Women and children acted alike as beasts of burden, pulling tubs, laden with coal.



THE CRYSTAL PALACE

Made entirely of glass on iron pillars and girders, it housed the Great Exhibition of London in 1851. Even tall trees were enclosed within its structure.

Art and science make people understand each other better.
By becoming prosperous through commerce and refined through art,
people learn to live at peace with one another. PRINCE ALBERT

Wordsworth, Browning; among historians were George Grote (History of Greece published in several volumes between 1846 and 1856), Macaulay (History of England); prose-writers like John Ruskin, Newman; novelists in the persons of Charles Dickens, Thackeray, the Bronte Sisters (Charlotte, Emily and Anne), Lord Lytton; amongst philosophers were John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. There were famous painters headed by Joseph Turner and well-known sculptors such as Thomas Woolnor. In science, Charles Darwin was working on his *Origin of Species* (published in 1859) and Simpson had already introduced the use of chloroform in medical practice (1874). Lister was working on the use of antiseptics in surgery. In steel-making, a new process was being experimented upon (Bessemer's Process perfected by the year 1859).

The process of building iron ships was also developing. Previously, all ships, even steamships, were made of wood; now iron was found to be more suitable. The East India Company possessed four iron ships in 1842, and the English Navy, itself having none, borrowed these four iron ships from the Company for use in the China War (1840—42).* Even in 1854 the British Navy had no iron ships, and in the Crimean War the British fleet going to the Baltic consisted of wooden sailing ships fitted with steam engines to supplement the sails. Soon, however, the British ship-building industry took great strides, and it is remarkable that by 1914, before the first World War, Britain's total shipping tonnage was equal to the tonnage of all the other countries of the world taken together.

Mail between India and England

The mail from India in those days took two to three months to reach England. Consequently the Government and the people of England remained ignorant of the happenings in India while the revolt was spreading in all directions in northern India. Thus, on June 11, 1857, more than 50 regiments of Indian sepoys had mutinied, the whole of Avadh was in the hands of the rebels and the Europeans in Lucknow and Kanpur had been under siege, but the British Cabinet were unaware of all this and gave the following reply to a question tabled in the House of Commons: "There is now no reason for anxiety as regards the late unrest in Bengal. For, by the dexterity, firmness and quickness of my honourable and noble friend, Lord Canning, the seeds of unrest sown in the army have been completely rooted out."

Again, the unfortunate happenings at Sattichaura Ghat, Kanpur in which many Europeans were killed, took place in the last week of June, but to the question, "Is the rumour about Kanpur true", asked in the House of Lords on August 14, 1857, the following reply was given by the Cabinet's spokesman: "I have received a personal letter from General Sir Patrick Grant that the rumour about the massacre at Kanpur is altogether untrue and is a vile fabrication. A sepoy first set up the rumour. Not only is his baseness discovered, but he has been hanged for spreading the false rumour."

*The war was caused on account of China confiscating a large stock of opium exported from India and belonging to British traders at Canton. China was forced to cede Hong Kong to Britain and to open five other ports to British trade. There was a second war with China in 1856–60 in which the French aided the British. As a result, certain cities and ports were opened to foreign trade. The immediate cause of the second war was the seizure by Chinese authorities of a trading vessel flying the Union Jack.

ANNEXURE

Note on Florence Nightingale

With all the suffering which the Crimea brought upon the British and French troops, the war had a bright side too. This was the emergence of Florence Nightingale, THE LADY OF THE LAMP, *and the creator of modern nursing in hospitals.*

The graphic accounts of the miseries of the soldiers in the trenches had been sent from the field of battle by the famous war correspondent of *The Times,* Sir William Russell, and were published in English newspapers. The reports roused at once the indignation and the sympathy of the public. This was but reasonable because due to incompetence and corruption, the soldiers in the field were without clothes and without medical care; there were no bandages, no beds, too few doctors and only a few orderlies to look after the wounded whose number ran to four figures. It was then that this remarkable lady, who was a mere girl then, volunteered to go to the front to relieve the miseries of the wounded and to provide solace to the dying. Her offer was accepted.

She then organised a corps of educated and devoted girls and women with whom she proceeded to the theatre of war. She had to struggle against the War Office and the army medical authorities to obtain stores and comforts from England, but with her tenacity and ability she overcame all obstructions. She cleaned the hospitals and provided the wounded with nurses, with clean beds and clothes. In the result the death rate amongst the wounded was amazingly reduced; previously 420 out of every 1,000 died—this came down to 22 out of every 1,000 after Miss Nightingale took charge. But her work was most strenuous, and she fell seriously ill. She bore it all with cheerful courage and did not for a moment think of going back.

On the conclusion of the war, she returned home to continue her work in hospital hygiene, army and civilian nursing and the general improvement of the British health service. She had gained immense prestige in the Crimea, and this helped her to influence the authorities to give ear to her schemes. Nursing, which was previously the monopoly of males, was thrown open to women as a skilled profession. For all that she did in this line, Florence Nightingale is remembered as the creator of modern nursing.

Florence Nightingale's work, first in the Crimean war and thereafter in other spheres, is a landmark in the history of mankind.

In 1910 her long and useful career came to an end. By then the Crimean war had almost become a subject of history, but British hospitals became models for the world.

It was an irony of fate that this great woman, who lived a dedicated life for the alleviation of human suffering, and who takes her place amongst the noblest souls of the world, received no proper honour from the Government of her country. It was not much before her death, and when she had become almost senile, that the Order of Merit was sent to her. Nevertheless, the hygiene of hospitals and the comforts and solace which nurses provide to the sick all over the world are a living monument to the great soul.

And there also stands to her memory one of the most beautiful statues in London with the inscription LADY OF THE LAMP.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

STATE OF INDIA IN 1857

A. POLITICAL.

B. THE ARMY.

C. TRADE AND COMMERCE ; WORKS OF PUBLIC UTILITY.

D. AND YET THE PEOPLE WERE UNHAPPY AND DISCONTENTED.

A. POLITICAL

When the rebellion broke out in May, 1857, Lord Canning was the Governor-General of India with headquarters divided, according to season, between Calcutta and Simla. A year earlier he had taken charge from Lord Dalhousie who had retired after an eventful career of seven years. When Lord Canning became Governor-General, peace was reigning practically all through India—peace which, Lord Dalhousie thought, he had secured after many battles and reforms. A sketch of Lord Canning's career in India appears in Appendix C.

In 1857, as indeed during the subsequent period of British rule right up to the achievement of Independence, India, though geographically, culturally and economically a single indivisible unit, had two political divisions, namely, British India and the Indian States. British India was governed directly by the East India Company in accordance with the statutes of Parliament. It was made up of Regulation and non-Regulation provinces. The old Provinces of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the North-Western Provinces were the Regulation Provinces where a regulated law in the form of Regulations of the Governor-General-in-Council was applicable. The new provinces, like the Punjab, Avadh and Sind, were non-Regulation Provinces, deriving their name from the fact that the methods of administration there were not circumscribed by the forms applicable in the old provinces. The administration of each of these provinces was in the hands of a Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Chief Commissioner acting under the direction and control of the Governor-General of India-in-Council and through him of the authorities in London.

The Indian States, under the personal rule of Indian princes, were the other part of political India. They were in subsidiary alliance with, and under the paramountcy of, the British. The States were distinguishable from the provinces of British India in that the former, unlike the provinces, had not been annexed by the British. These States were of different categories having been evolved by different processes. There were, firstly, the old established States such as those in Rajputana which were in existence before the advent of foreign invaders from the north. The other class consisted mainly of the States with Muslim dynasties which had been founded by the nobles or the

viceroys of foreign conquerors. Thirdly, were the newer States which the British recognised during the final stages of their consolidation of power.

In internal matters generally, these States were autonomous, but in all external affairs, and in certain important internal matters also, they were under the authority of the Company which had, by now, become the sovereign power in India in place of the Delhi Emperors who were merely titular monarchs with jurisdiction confined to the Delhi Fort in which they lived.

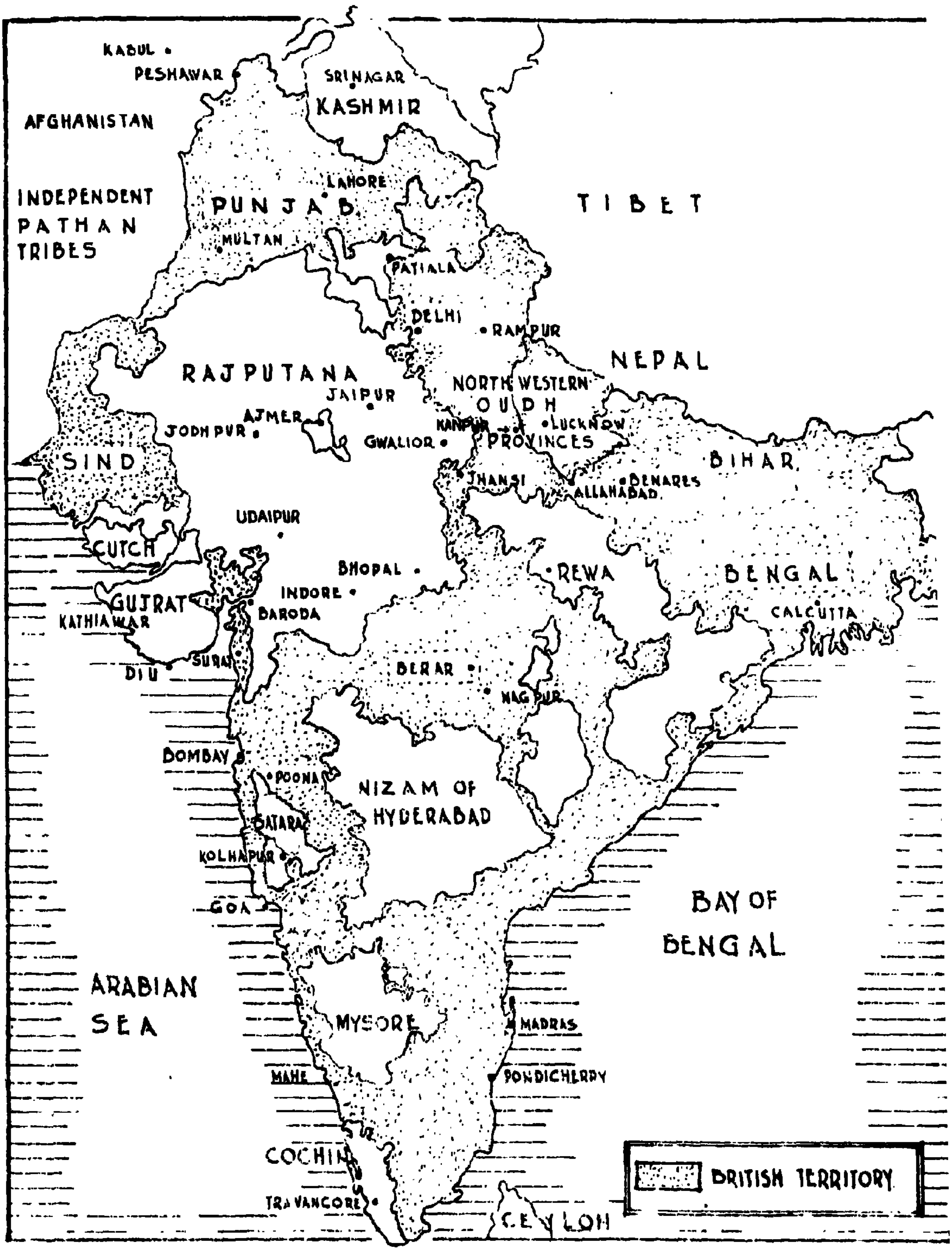
According to another classification, these States fell into two categories, namely, the independent States and the dependent States. The dependent States were those which were created by the British for political or other reasons or those which, though not so created, owed their existence directly to their recognition by the British. Examples of these were Tonk, Satara and Mysore. In addition, those States were also dependent States which had been formerly dependent on some other States which had been annexed by the British, such as the prinicipality of Jhansi, which was previously included in the domain of the Peshwa of Poona and which had subsequently been ceded to the British. Independent States were those which did not fall in the category of dependent States, that is to say, they had an independent pre-existence, for instance Gwalior and most of the States in Rajputana.

Between the year 1818, when on the liquidation of the Peshwaship of Poona the Maratha empire was incorporated into British India, and the year 1856, the Indian States had completely acquiesced in the paramount position of the East India Company. Those which asserted themselves against British intervention had been annexed on one ground or the other. These States were controlled by a Resident for each of the bigger States, while the smaller ones were grouped together and included in the jurisdiction of one Resident or the other.

These States constituted about 45 per cent. of the total Indian territory. The number was of the order of 500 units. The larger of these were Kashmir, Hyderabad, Mysore, Kolhapur, Baroda, Gwalior, Indore, Rewa, the Rajputana States of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur and the Punjab States of Patiala and Kapurthala. About one-third of the total number were tiny areas of less than 10 square miles.

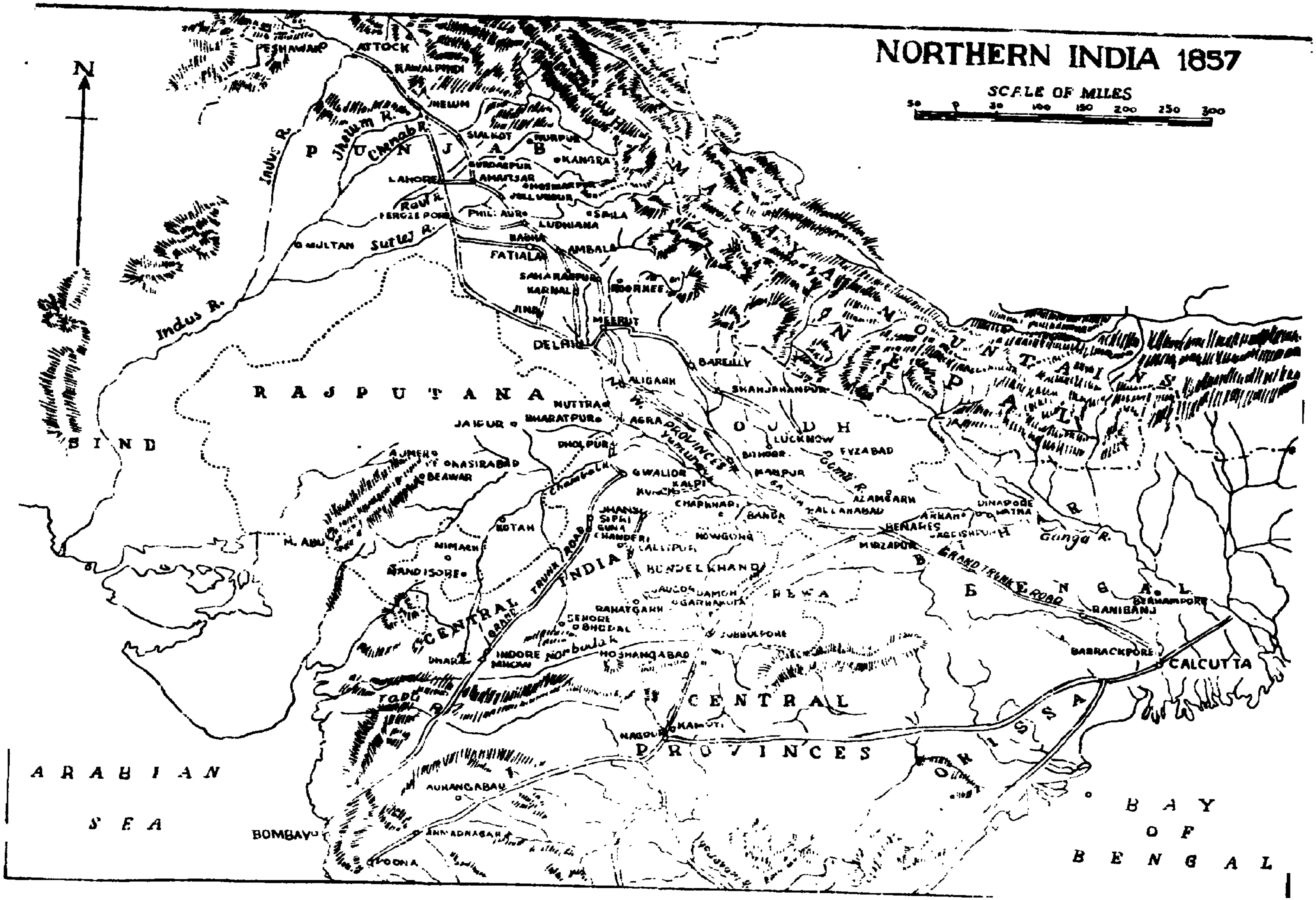
The administration of these States was in a miserable condition. The *London Times* thus described their situation in a leading article in 1853: "We have emancipated these pale and ineffectual pageants of royalty from the ordinary fate that awaits oriental despotism . . . . This advantage (of securing able and vigorous princes through rebellion) we have taken away from the inhabitants of the States of India still governed by Native princes. It has been well said that we give these princes power without responsibility. Our hand of iron maintains them on the throne despite their imbecility, their vices and their crimes. The result is, in most of the States, a chronic anarchy, under which the revenues of the States are dissipated between the mercenaries of the camp and the minions of the court. The heavy and arbitrary taxes levied on the miserable raiyats serve only to feed the meanest and the most degraded of mankind. The theory seems in fact admitted that the Government is not for the people, but the people for the king, and that so long as we secure the king his sinecure royalty, we discharge all the duty that we, as Sovereign of India, owe to his subjects who are virtually ours."

The rulers of Indian States—almost all—remained aloof from the rebellion of 1857. Some of them actually gave effective assistance to the British in suppressing it. The role of these States was acknowledged by Lord Canning when he gratefully said that



INDIA IN 1856

As at the end of British rule so in 1856, India was composed of British India under the direct administration of the East India Company, and the Indian States, the rulers of which managed their affairs in accordance with the wishes of the paramount power, the Company. The number of these States, some as big as Hyderabad, many as tiny as a small town, was about 500, covering about 45 per cent. of the total area of India.


NORTHERN INDIA 1857
SCALE OF MILES
50 0 50 100 150 200 250 300
N
PUNJAB
RAJPUTANA
SIND
OUDH
NEPAL
BENGAL
CENTRAL INDIA
CENTRAL PROVINCES
ORISSA
BUNDELKHAND
REWA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
PESHAWAR
ATTOCK
RAWALPINDI
JHELUM
SIALKOT
NURPUR
KANGRA
GURDASPUR
LAHORE
AMRITSAR
HOSHIARPUR
JULLUNDUR
FEROZEPORE
PHILLAUR
LUDHIANA
SIMLA
MULTAN
NABHA
PATIALA
AMBALA
SAHARANPUR
KARNAL
ROORKEE
JIND
MEERUT
DELHI
BAREILLY
ALIGARH
SHAHJAHANPUR
MUTTRA
BHARATPUR
AGRA
JAIPUR
DHOLPUR
LUCKNOW
FYZABAD
BITHOOR
CAWNPUR
AJMER
NASIRABAD
BEAWAR
GWALIOR
KALPI
AZAMGARH
BANDA
ALLAHABAD
DINAPORE
PATNA
ARRAH
BENARES
JAGDISHPUR
MIRZAPUR
KOTAH
NIMACH
MANDISORE
JHANSI
SIPRI
GUNA
NOWGONG
DAMOH
GARHAKOTA
RAHATGARH
SEHORE
BHOPAL
JUBBULPORE
DHAR
INDORE
MHOW
HOSHANGABAD
NAGPUR
KAMPTI
AURANGABAD
BOMBAY
AHMADNAGAR
POONA
BERHAMPORE
RANIGANJ
BARRACKPORE
CALCUTTA
Indus R.
Jhelum R.
Chenab R.
Ravi R.
Sutlej R.
Jumna R.
Chambal R.
Gumti R.
Ganga R.
Narbada R.
Tapti R.
GRAND TRUNK ROAD

they had acted as "break-waters in the storm which would have swept over us in one great wave". The treaties made with the States were maintained on the assumption of Indian government by the Crown, while those who had no treaties received sanads, guaranteeing to them their status and the right to adopt a son in the absence of a surviving male issue.

Apart from Indian States, the British had also an ally in the independent kingdom of Nepal under the virtual rule of its Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief—the King himself being merely a figure-head. At the time of the Indian revolt, Maharaja Jang Bahadur was the holder of that office and had marched in person with his Gorkha soldiers to assist the British in the relief of Lucknow.

The Ameer of Afghanistan, the aged Dost Mohammad, who had at one time been dethroned by the British and was later by them restored, had now found that Afghanistan had little to gain by quarrels with the British and more to gain by their friendship. So he had now reconciled himself to good feelings towards them. Soon after Lord Canning's arrival he had concluded a treaty of friendship with the Government of India, and had come down in person to the Khybar Pass to meet the British envoys. On signing the treaty he remarked : "Now I have made a treaty with the British and I will keep it till death". He kept his promise during the rebellion.

B. THE ARMY

Immediately before the rebellion, the East India Company had three separate armies, one in each Presidency. They were known as the Bengal Army, the Bombay Army and the Madras Army, after the name of the Presidency to which each belonged. It was only the Bengal Army which mutinied, the other two remaining practically unaffected. The total number of troops in all the three armies was 2,38,000, made up of 2,00,000 Indian sepoys, the rest 38,000 being Europeans. The Bengal Army itself contained 1,51,000 combatants, made up of 1,28,000 Indians and 23,000 Europeans.*

Of the 23,000 European troops in the Bengal Army, about 13,000 were in the Punjab alone. The rest were interspersed in various places so that, with the exception of Dinapur (near Patna), there were hardly any European soldiers in the whole area between Bengal and Meerut.

The Bengal Army had its own peculiarities which distinguished it entirely from the armies of Madras and Bombay. Brahmans and Rajputs, the superior castes amongst the Hindus, predominated in the Bengal Army. Forty thousand of these men, that is to say, nearly one-third of the whole, belonged to Avadh, and a large number of them were drawn from Brahman families who had their peculiarities about food and worship. With all its defects, such as difficulties about messing, service overseas and beyond the Indus, and laxity of discipline, the Bengal Army had a meritorious record of conquest for the Company.

There were in the Bengal Army, 74 Indian infantry battalions, 10 regiments of cavalry

*On May 10, 1857, the date of the out-break at Meerut, the precise strength of the Bengal Army was:

European officers and men	..	..	22,698
Indians	..	..	.. 1,28,663
		Total ..	1,51,361

and 12 regiments of irregular cavalry and 17 batteries of artillery. In Avadh there were 10 infantry battalions, 3 cavalry regiments and 4 batteries of artillery. In the Gwalior Contingent, there were 7 infantry battalions, 2 cavalry regiments and 4 batteries.

Out of 74 regular regiments of the Bengal Native Infantry, 45 actually mutinied, 20 were disarmed, three were disbanded. The remaining six remained loyal. The map in Chapter 17 shows the location of the various units of the Bengal Army and indicates the regiments which rose in mutiny.

The Madras Army was smaller than the Bengal Army. There were in it 52 infantry battalions and 8 cavalry regiments with a suitable proportion of artillery. The Bombay Army was smaller still, consisting of 24 battalions of infantry, 6 cavalry regiments with the necessary complement of guns.

The cost of the entire army of the Company was as follows :

		Number of men	Amount spent	*Per capita* expenditure
			Rs.	Rs.
European officers and soldiers	..	51,316	5,66,81,100	1,104
Indian soldiers	..	2,64,204	4,13,41,250	156
Total	..	3,15,520	9,80,22,350	--
Cost *per capita* calculated on the whole army	..		..	Rs. 310

Apart from the glaring disparity in emoluments, the European corps had the further advantage that they took no part in the rough ordinary duties of the service.

In addition to the Company's army proper, there were Subsidiary Forces, one for each State or a group of States, which were maintained under the Company's control within the areas of the States for the ostensible purpose of defending the ruler's territories. At the same time, this force was at the beck and call of the British, should the ruler be inclined to be refractory. The cost of these forces was defrayed by the rulers.

C. TRADE AND COMMERCE ; WORKS OF PUBLIC UTILITY

It is a mistake to assume that India in the past was primarily an agricultural country. There was much industrial activity and it is said that, before the British rule, India was a foremost manufacturing country in the world. She flourished in the trade of cotton piece-goods which had a ready market in Europe and other countries of the civilised world. It was to buy her cotton fabrics that the nations of Europe came to India. The export of cotton goods was channelised through the East India Company.

The position, however, changed by the beginning of the nineteenth century by which time the import of India's cotton goods into England was forbidden ; on the contrary England began to export machine-made cotton goods to India. Thus India's export trade in cotton to Europe through England, and to England itself, came to an end. And at the same time British goods were forced on the country without paying any duty ; the English manufacturer also employed the arm of political injustice to strangle the indigenous competitor whom he could not have met on equal terms. The textile manufactures of India, which were world famous and which were the mainstay of Indian trade, were completely ruined. With it were ruined also a large mass of indigenous weavers, textile traders and financiers. This position continued until the mutiny.

Food-stuffs were selling cheap as compared with the prices now prevailing. In March, 1857, for example, wheat was selling in the North-Western Provinces at an average rate

of 30 seers a rupee, barley and gram one maund a rupee, rice at rates varying between 12 to 30 seers, sambhar salt 15 seers, ghee 3 seers and bhoosa 2 maunds a rupee. (*N. W. P. Gazette*, March, 1857).

Works of Public Utility

The eight years of Lord Dalhousie (January, 1848—February, 1856) had brought many changes for which, of all the Governors-General, he was the most-praised on the one hand and the most-blamed on the other. It was said that he it was who made the British the paramount power in the whole of the Indian peninsula ; others say, he made the Indian Mutiny. Leaving these blames and praises aside, it must be conceded that works of public utility were undertaken by him on a grand scale. A new Department of Public Works (in place of the old Military Board) was created for the construction of public buildings and roads. There were previously no metalled roads in India, and in Europe too metalled roads came only with the Industrial Revolution. In the time of Ashoka, routes connecting the bigger towns existed ; these were lined with trees and, at convenient places, there were places for halt. During the Muslim rule this practice was continued, but the surface of the roads was still largely un-metalled. Lord Dalhousie undertook a programme of metalling roads and building road bridges. He also promoted works of irrigation and the great Ganga Canal, which had begun in 1839, was completed in his time. Other irrigation schemes were also taken up : some of the old canals were reconstructed and new ones started. He planned the scheme of a net-work of railways, a beginning having been made by the completion of the Bombay-Thana line in 1853.

With the electric telegraph the name of Lord Dalhousie is specially connected. In England the first message sent by telegraph was only in 1844 and it was very remarkable, and does him real credit, that before he left India in 1856 he had, within such a short time, introduced the telegraph in this country. The post office was also organised and expanded. The first regular postage system was introduced in India in 1766 by Lord Clive, but it was originally meant for official use only. It was expanded by Warren Hastings to cover private letters also. Pre-payment in cash had to be made at varying rates according to distance and weight. But postage stamps came to be introduced much later, and it was Dalhousie who in 1854 introduced the first all-India stamps and cheap and uniform postal rates, including the one-anna post. The stamps were first printed in Calcutta, but from 1855 until 1925 they were obtained from England.

Education at the lower stages was being imparted in Indian languages and other educational schemes were started. Prison administration was also improved.

D. AND YET PEOPLE WERE UNHAPPY.

These works of public utility had their own good features inasmuch as they laid the foundation of future industrialization and brought the science of technology to India. The exports and imports of India had been almost doubled. But though these things brought some measure of prosperity the masses in general were miserable with discontent prevailing almost everywhere.

Of the causes of this discontent mention may be made of the bitter conduct of young European officers towards Indians. This was acknowledged by broad-minded British statesmen as would be clear from the following extract from a speech made on June 7, 1858, in the House of Commons by one Mr. Drummond, a parliamentarian with genuine sympathy for the Indian people :

"Mr. Rees states, in his narrative, that the conduct of many of our young officers towards the natives is cruel and tyrannical ; while the *London Quarterly* declares

that the behaviour of Europeans is marked by a high degree of pride and insolence . . . . Now, if we are proud of our aristocracy and mindful of their dignity, how can we think that these things do not rankle in the breasts of men who can trace up their hereditary rank and their possessions to a period anterior to the time of Alexander the Great? Are we so foolish as to imagine that, because they do not retort and insult upon the moment, they do not feel it? We may depend upon it that the Italian proverb is true in India as everywhere else—'Vengeance sleeps long, but never dies'.

"The people of India having been subjected to such treatment, is it surprising that they should hate us? Mr. Fraser, a gentleman quoted by Mr. Norton, states that the people generally are dissatisfied and that they have too much cause to be so. He adds that there is disaffection enough for half a dozen rebellions . . . .

"Now, the root of the whole evil is the doctrine that India is a country to be exploited for the benefit of the Civil Service. If we are going to look upon India as we have looked upon it hitherto as a mere place of plunder for English officials, we shall surely lose it, and shall deserve to lose it."

The great thinker, Herbert Spencer, in his *Social Statistics* has also referred to the causes of Indian discontent before the mutiny era. He has recorded on authority :

(*a*) that the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade by the Company's officials were obtained by the "most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country" ;

(*b*) that the English compelled Indian traders and artisans to buy and sell at just what rates they pleased, on pain of flogging or confinement ;

(*c*) that demands for the revenue were exorbitant and inequitous ; the salt monopoly and the pitiless taxation extracted from the poor ryots nearly half the produce of the soil ;

(*d*) that the police authorities allowed, in league with wealthy people, the machinery of the law to be used for the purposes of extortion ;

(*e*) that it was common with people in the interior to run into woods at the sight of an European ; that the so-called European gentleman would ride his elephant through the crops of impoverished peasants and would supply himself with provisions from the villagers without paying for them.

The masses were impoverished because "generation after generation, the great aim and object of the servants of the Company, from the high civil and military functionaries downwards, was to squeeze as large as possible a fortune out of the country as quickly as might be."*

Nationalist feelings amongst Indians were simply not tolerated. If anybody exhibited a spirit of freedom, talked of independence or the faults of British rule he was labelled as *anti-British* and, not unoften, as renegade traitor. If any sensible Englishman asserted or made mention of liberty on the part of Indians or ventured to sympathise with the people of the East, he was at once denounced as a *white nigger*. The majority of the Englishmen "contended not merely that the love of country, that the spirit of liberty, as cherished by European races, is in India wholly unknown, but that Asiatic nations, and especially the nations of India, have no right to judge what is best for themselves ; no right to revolt against the beneficence of a more civilised race of white men, who would think and act for them and deprive them, for their own good, of all their most cherished rights and their most valued possessions" (Sir John Kaye).

But we must now turn to the next chapter for a more detailed discussion of the causes of this general discontent.

*An unnamed English writer quoted by Basu, volume V.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

A. WORLD-WIDE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY.

B. WARNINGS.

C. PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ON CAUSES OF REVOLT.

D. DISSATISFACTION IN THE BENGAL ARMY.

E. LOSS OF MORAL HOLD ON SEPOYS.

F. DISCONTENT AMONGST THE MASSES.

G. DOCTRINE OF LAPSE.

H. ANNEXATION OF AVADH.

I. THE CRIMEA AND AFGHANISTAN.

J. OTHER CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES.

K. THE AFFAIR OF THE GREASED CARTRIDGES.

"If there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire. The matter of seditions is of two kinds—much poverty and much discontentment. It is certain, so many overthrown estates, so many votes for troubles . . . . The causes and motives for sedition are innovations in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, deaths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate ; and whatsoever in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause."

—BACON.

A. WORLD-WIDE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY.

As will be seen in Chapter 39, the revolt was not only the mutiny of the Bengal Army, but was also a struggle of the civil population against foreign rule. There were certain causes which prompted the soldiers to mutiny ; there were certain other causes which led the civil population to rise in rebellion and assist the mutineers. In addition, there were certain common matters which caused dissatisfaction both amongst the sepoys and the civilians. And so it was that the army and the people

made common cause in their fight against the British.

It is significant to note here that the middle of the nineteenth century (the years 1821—1865, to be precise) was a period of mass up-risings against foreign or dictatorial rule throughout Europe and in some other parts of the world. Thus, there was the Greek war of independence against the Turks who had been ruling that country since 1460. The revolt, started in 1821, soon became almost a war of extermination on both sides. The struggle went on till 1832 when Greece became completely independent. There was then the war between Belgium and Holland following Belgium's declaration of separation from Holland in 1830. Belgium had previously been under Spain and then under Austria. It was in 1815 that, by the Congress of Vienna, it was joined to Holland in the hope that the two countries would make a strong buffer state between France and Germany. The Belgians, however, did not like their association with the Dutch. There was a war which in 1839 brought about an independent Belgium with its perpetual neutrality guaranteed by Great Britain and the other powerful nations of Europe.

In Egypt, then a province of Turkey, Mehemet Ali, the ruler, rose against the Turkish Sultan in 1832. Eventually, he made peace on the condition that he should be the hereditary *Pasha* of Egypt.

There was also a rising in France in 1848 against the Emperor Louis Philippe, followed by risings in Poland against the Russians, in Hungary and Vienna against the Habsburgs, in North Italy against the Austrians, and in Germany for a new Constitution.

There was also the American Civil War (1861—65)—a struggle for liberty in a different form. There had been domestic quarrels between the American States in the North and those in the South whereupon the South declared that it would break away (secede) from the Union. Civil War then broke out, killing and crippling over a million men.

The abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of slaves (1807—33) was another sign of the pervading global movement for freedom.

The peoples of the world at large were thus charged with the spirit of liberty. India was no exception to the general nationalist assertions. The rebellion of 1857 was the nation's desire for freedom expressed in unmistakable terms; it was not, as some English writers have suggested, the action only of some disgruntled individuals.

B. WARNINGS.

Warnings, that the sepoys of the Bengal Army were dissatisfied to the extent of rising in open mutiny, had come on the surface several months before the actual outbreak. Experienced officers took note of the brooding symptoms and warned Government about the possibility of a great upheaval in the Bengal Army. These officers had opportunities of judging from time to time, even some years prior to 1857, that the Indian troops had serious grievances, that there was deficiency in their discipline, that their spirit was not very good, that they were headstrong in urging their rights. But Lord Dalhousie was incapable of heeding these warnings. And he felt assured that he had been able to usher in an era of peace and prosperity in the country. Lord Canning, taking his place in 1856, was a sober statesman and the forebodings caused him anxiety. But the discontent amongst the sepoys, in the houses of displaced Indian rulers and amongst the masses was too deep to admit of the application of a quick remedy.

C. PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ON CAUSES OF REVOLT.

The events of 1857 represented a combined force of the serving soldiers on the one hand and the civil population on the other, to oust the alien rulers. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has, in his *Discovery of India,* traced the motive of the revolt to the growing discontent amongst the feudal chiefs and their followers in the upper provinces. The masses also shared this discontent and there was a wide-spread and intense anti-British feeling. The general masses of the people were put to difficulties by the behaviour of the officials of the East India Company as well as by their ignorance of sound administrative principles. They had lost their balance of judgment on account of the absolute power they enjoyed over vast numbers of people with little check or hindrance. Even the judicial system introduced by the Company was of little benefit to the people because of its complications and of the ignorance of the judges of the languages and the customs of the country. This, the learned author has observed, was the position in the upper provinces where the impact of the revolt was the greatest. As for Bengal, it had compromised itself to British rule. Being under that rule for nearly a century the peasantry had been 'devastated by famine and crushed by economic burden'; the new intelligentsia hoped that progress would come through English liberalism. More or less, the same position obtained in western India, in Madras and Bombay.

Classification of causes.

The causes of the revolt may now be discussed in some detail. This can conveniently be done under the following broad headings :

(a) Dissatisfaction of the Indian soldiers of the Bengal Army ;

(b) Loss of moral hold on sepoys ;

(c) General discontent amongst the people at large against the administration of the East India Company ;

(d) Dissatisfaction amongst certain special classes caused by :
the Doctrine of Lapse, and
the Annexations ;

(e) Some miscellaneous contributory causes :
The Crimea ;
Afghanistan ;
Others.

(f) The affair of the greased cartridges.

These have been dealt with in separate sections that follow.

D. DISSATISFACTION IN THE BENGAL ARMY.

Withdrawal of option about overseas service.

The sepoys of the Bengal Army had mostly been enlisted on terms which did not compel them to render service overseas. Due to troubles which had earlier arisen by an attempt to supersede this condition by the army authorities, it was determined during Lord Dalhousie's time that the existing rights should not be interfered with. This directive had been scrupulously respected since then. Lord Canning thought that, while the existing sepoys could continue to enjoy their contract, the future recruits need not be given any such option. A general order was issued that new recruits would have to render service overseas and that if any one did not like this condition he was free to refuse enlistment. But it was also made clear that having once enlisted, a sepoy would have to go overseas or march to Afghanistan, if need arose. The high-caste Hindu sepoys had in the past also objected to proceeding to Afghanistan where they could not eat according to their religious belief, and had, under compelling circumstances, to purchase food

from Muslim shops, entirely against their will.

The above order did not, of course, directly affect the serving sepoys. At the same time, they felt that it would mean the end of a military career for their sons. The new recruit had the choice either of foregoing his paternal profession or to give up his religion. The order had also its adverse effect on the general population who began to think that it was another step towards the propagation of Christianity. After the issue of this order, there was, as was to be expected, a marked decline of new recruits from high caste families.

Service in Afghanistan.

Another reason which added to the discontent amongst the sepoys of the Bengal Army arose from the First Afghan War (1839—42) in which the sepoys were taken to Kabul. Under the terms of their enlistment they were exempted from service overseas, but Kabul did not mean the crossing of the sea and so they could not claim exemption from the Afghanistan expedition. At the same time, they were rightly apprehensive that by going into that far-off land they would suffer expulsion from their caste because in Afghanistan they could not perform their daily ablutions and had to purchase their food from Muslim shop-keepers. So, on return home they found themselves excommunicated. Even their brother sepoys refused to dine or smoke with them. None of their family people or relations would eat with them nor were they allowed even to touch the cooking utensils of others. All were looked down upon as out-castes and treated accordingly.

Apprehensive of the same fate, many sepoys who had not yet been required to march beyond the Indus or to go to Afghanistan obtained their discharge; many others deserted. This gave rise to a general feeling amongst the Hindu warrior-classes that an Indian Government which would safeguard their religion was to be preferred to foreign rulers.

No avenues of promotion.

The Indian sepoys of the Army had few chances of promotion. Not that they lacked ability—but the European officers, with their attitude of superiority-complex, could not tolerate Indians rising to officer-ranks. It was only at an advanced age that one man here and another there was promoted as Subedar or to some such rank. In their old age, these Subedars lacked the fitness and the energy of youth for their new responsibilities. At the same time, the able men amongst the sepoys laboured under a sense of frustration. Thus, these factors contributed to the loss of discipline too.

Other grievances of sepoys.

Amongst their other grievances one was that their emoluments were a pittance as compared to the pay and allowances of European soldiers. Out of his meagre pay, a sepoy on first recruitment had to spend a few months' pay in giving illegal gratifications. The amount to be so given was Rs.16, out of which Rs.5 or Rs.6 went to the European Sergeant of the regiment to which the recruit was posted. This meant that for two or three months the new recruit had to go without pay which was Rs.7 a month. He had to pay for his uniform, and after meeting the cost of his ration-account with the regimental *bania* (the amount was deducted from his pay), he received on the pay-day a sum not exceeding one rupee ; some times a few annas only. The sowar received a higher pay (from Rs.21 to Rs.30), but he too fared no better, because of the many more deductions. The sepoys had a further grievance on account of the stoppage of the *batta* (or additional) allowance for service in far-off places which he used to receive previously.

Senior Indian soldiers and havaldars were often insulted by young European officers, and more often rudely treated.

Objectionable epithets were used by young officers in their anger against Indian soldiers. Even on the parade ground they were subjected to the vilest abuse. On top of all this, the sepoy did not get fair play if he made a legitimate complaint to the Adjutant against the regimental Sergeant. Each Indian Company had a European Sergeant and some of these men were in the habit of abusing, and even striking, the sepoys on flimsy grounds. The Adjutant took little notice of the complaints.

The accretion of power gained by the Company was apparently the cause of this maltreatment ; in the earlier days there was good understanding between the sepoys and their British officers who used to treat them with great kindness.

E. LOSS OF MORAL HOLD ON SEPOYS.

Luxury and extravagance of junior officers.

The extent to which the junior officers of the Bengal Army took to improvidence and luxury is illustrated by a case in which the officer maintained a large retinue of personal servants in direct violation of military discipline. He travelled in a *palki* instead of on horse-back, and the team of his personal servants included a *khansama* and *khidmatgar,* a *sardar*-bearer and several bearers, a servant for his pipe, another for his umbrella, another for his bottle and so on— all doing the work which one single man could do. European officers got themselves shaved by the barber while stiil in bed half awake, half asleep. This life of luxury could not be lived within their legitimate emoluments, so they freely and habitually went in for loans. The debt was particularly heavy in the case of married officers. The creditors were not only out-siders but even the pay-havaldars of the army. In addition to living such an expensive and lavish life, these officers also spent a good part of their pay in giving feasts, in gambling on the race-course and at the table. It was not, therefore, surprising that the officers should have lost their moral hold on the sepoys. Also, the rank and file began to look upon them as objects of contempt.

European officers' harem.

Most of the military officers had taken Indian women as their mistresses. It is said that during the early days of the Company, this practice exercised a healthy influence in the regiment because through these ladies a good amount of near contact was established between the officers and the sepoys. In course of time this practice became a source of corruption. One form which this corruption took was that bribes were offered to these mistresses to induce them to ask the 'sahibs' to show indulgence to the sepoys. Mechanising sepoys sometimes introduced their own female relations in the officers' harem and this added to the prevailing intrigue and corruption.

Good officers drafted to Civil.

Civil administration offered greater emoluments and an easier life with a good deal of power and authority. It was not illogical, therefore, for promising as well as for experienced military officers to aspire for transfer to civilian posts. But such transfers adversely affected the army which gradually became denuded of efficient officers. A decline in morale was the inevitable result.

F. DISCONTENT AMONGST THE MASSES.

Religious susceptibilities.

The activities of Christian missionaries in India had been causing concern and uneasiness both to sepoys and the civil population. They feared, and their fears were not altogether unfounded, that the British were out to Christianise India by various means. The field of work of the missionaries

was expanding in every direction with the aid and encouragement of the Company's officers. The missionaries were running Mission schools with the idea of popularising Christianity. They were also doing their work in hospitals and in jails. It was not, therefore, unreasonable on the part of the common people to entertain the fear that the British, who professed the Christian faith, wanted at once or gradually to convert Indians to become followers of their own religion.

The abolition of the practice of *sati* had been decreed many years ago in the régime of Lord William Bentinck (1829). This was of course the right thing, but it troubled the mind of the Hindus who thought that the English were out to destroy their traditions, and the mind of the Muslims who feared that if Hindu religion could be lightly treated, Islam too was in danger. Then came, during the earlier months of Lord Canning's Governor-Generalship, the Hindu Widows Remarriage Act. The measure, which had been formulated during Lord Dalhousie's time, was enforced in the first year of Lord Canning's regime. This Act lent some further support to the unfounded rumours that Lord Canning had been sent to India to convert Hindus and Muslims to Christianity.

The Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850, had also its place in creating apprehensions about religion. This measure enabled Hindus and Muslims, converted to Christianity, to inherit their ancestral property. Before the passing of this Act, such converts were, under their personal law, excluded from inheritance. The Hindus and Muslims regarded this measure as a concession to Christian converts. To the Hindu, the enactment was particularly offensive because it enabled a convert into Christianity to inherit the ancestral property without the obligation of performing religious duties to his deceased forefathers.

Of the other instances involving inroads into the Indian religions, mention may be made of the following :

(*a*) Temples and shrines, falling in the alignment of roads under construction, were pulled down. The people began to think that this was yet another excuse for destroying religious beliefs.

(*b*) In public hospitals, the time-honoured custom of *parda* was disregarded. There was the case of a large hospital being built in Saharanpur and, on its completion in 1850, a proclamation was issued by the principal authorities of the station saying that all sick men and women, high or low, *parda-nashin* and others, must resort to this hospital for treatment. All Indian practitioners were forbidden to prescribe or attend to the sick. The people thought that this was another method to take away the dignity and honour of all.*

(*c*) During famines, helpless children were taken to orphanages to be brought up as Christians.

(*d*) On one occasion in 1855, the military authorities banned a Moharram procession in a military cantonment† from the middle of the night of Saturday (September 22) to the noon of the following Sunday on account of the latter day being the Christian Sabbath. The order was, however, promptly cancelled by the Governor-General, but before this was done, it had already excited bitter feelings amongst the local Muslims. As a result, some serious incidents took place in which a murderous assault was made on a British

*Dr. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, p. 13, footnote.
†Cantonment of Bolarum near Hyderabad.

Colonel who had snatched away the flags of the processionists.

(e) In 1855 an order was issued by the Railway authorities that in the railway trains (which had come into existence then) no caste distinction would be made in the seating arrangements; this meant that Harijans, then regarded as untouchables, could sit in proximity of others. This gave rise to the belief that the measure was a prelude to the abolition of the caste system.

Contemptuous treatment of Indians.

Almost every Englishman in India carried a deep-rooted contempt for Indians. It is said that even when an Englishman did some kindness, he accompanied it by a contemptuous countenance. Even clergymen were not better in this respect. Sir William H. Russell, the noted writer, mentions 'racial arrogance' of the English employees of the East India Company, including military personnel, as the primary cause of the uprising. Gradually, this treatment created a corresponding hatred in the Indian mind towards Englishmen in general. The small fraction of the population which came in direct contact with Englishmen, acting as magistrates or tax-collectors, had unpleasant experiences of the contact. The great majority, which never saw a Britisher was, however, filled with uncomplimentary stories about him. Thus, between the English and the Indian there was mutual hatred; this also served to create a void ditch between the ruler and the ruled. As the stories of rudeness and discourtesy shown to Indians gained wide currency, the English, as a race, came to be regarded as foul people. Thus, the insolence and the show of racial superiority of the ruling race fomented, against the British, an amount of discontent and hatred which could not long remain suppressed.

Exclusion from higher appointments.

This was another cause of the general discontentment. On the executive side, the highest office to which the ablest Indian could rise was that of a deputy collector; on the judicial side, the post of sadar amin (civil judge) was all that he could aspire for. The highest classes of society, whose forefathers had carried positions of independent control as governors of provinces or commanders of armies, felt the humiliation of their new positions. The enlightened amongst the English administrators had felt unhappy about this, and as long back as 1818, Sir Thomas Munro* had written to the Governor-General:

> "Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence and often with great cruelty, but none has treated them with so much scorn as we, none has stigmatized the whole people as unworthy of trust, as incapable of honesty and as fit to be employed only where we cannot do without them. It seems to be not only ungenerous, but impolitic to debase the character of a people fallen under our domain."

Corrupt law courts, corrupt police and petty officers.

Bribes were rampant in the courts of the Company. The law itself was good, and so were the presiding officers. But the people could not help the impression that the illegal gratification secured by their subordinates was shared also by the judges and the magistrates. The well-to-do people who could afford bribes found law courts an instrument of oppression because they were able to establish a false claim through false witnesses and fabricated documents. The chief reason for the rebellion in one particular territory was said to have been that

*Sir Thomas Munro was an officer of great understanding and administrative acumen. Entering the Company's service as military cadet in 1780, he rose to become the Governor of Madras. While still holding that office he died in 1827. He was reputed for the broadness of his sympathies and the benevolence of his character. His name is still taken with reverence in the Madras districts where he served as Collector and where people regard him as one of their greatest benefactors. There are several books on his life, but his own letters and minutes contain the truest and the most vivid record of his life's work. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru has freely drawn upon them in his *Discovery of India*.

the people could not get justice in the courts because they had no money to give bribes. This brought in the ruin of many people through the decrees falsely obtained against them by their well-to-do adversaries. Mr. Raikes, Judge of the Sadar Court, Agra, frankly condemned the English system of civil procedure which was deeply disliked by the people, and rightly so.*

The police and the petty officers of the Company were also notoriously corrupt.

Sales of Land.

"There is nothing amongst the agricultural population that creates a greater hatred of our rule than the facilities offered to the most unprincipled class of money-lenders in the world in oppressing an ignorant and careless peasantry . . . . I found that no class seemed to have acted with more vindictiveness and hate against us as the smaller class of land-holders whom the baniyas had dispossessed through the medium of our courts."† Under the old system, if a landholder fell into arrears of revenue, he could be seized and kept under duress until his relations cleared the dues and secured his release. Thus, for practical purposes, land was inalienable. The Company's Government adopted the system of selling the defaulter's land. The result was that dispossession of land-holders became a thing of everyday occurrence, particularly because the Company's officers assessed the revenue at excessive figures which the land-holders could not pay. So long as the zamindar had family jewels and horses and cattle, he would sell them to retain the land of his ancestors to which he was greatly attached, not so much for financial reasons as for reasons of sentiment and social status. When done up, he had no alternative to saving himself from ejectment. This enraged an influential section of the society. When the mutiny occurred, they found that an opportunity for retrieving their position had come and they threw themselves with the general conflagration.

The new law for sales of land caused equal hardship to the smaller peasant. Being in chronic debt to the baniya, he lost his fields to him in satisfaction of money-decrees.

Thus the zamindar and the peasant, both of whom had suffered, joined together in a common purpose to oust the British.

Other grounds of discontent.

Amongst these mention may be made of the increased rates and taxes which the poor people found it irksome to bear. In a proclamation issued, during the revolt, in the name of the Hindus and the Muslims of Delhi to the people of Hindustan, it was complained that the British had increased the revenue demand by some 50 per cent., the chaukidari tax by several-fold ; that road-toll at six pies per head was being levied, that each cart had to pay a tax of four to eight annas, so that only those who could pay were permitted to travel on the public roads. It was added that the occupation of all respectable and learned men had gone, that the people had been ruined and that millions were destitute of the necessities of life.‡

G. DOCTRINE OF LAPSE.

"Are crowns and empire,
The government and safety of mankind,
Trifles of such light moment to be left
Like some rich toy, or ring, or fancied gem,
Like pledge of parting friends ?
Can kings to thus,
And give away a people for a legacy ?"

These lines enunciate in poetic language the

*Raikes, *Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces of India*, p. 7.
†Robertson, *District Duties during the Revolt in the N. W. P. of India in* 1857, pp. 135, 137.
‡Foreign Secret Consultations, no. 14, April 30, 1858.

principle on which a benevolent sovereign power should act in its dealings with its subordinate chieftains. It was this principle which Lord Dalhousie invoked in support of his *Doctrine of Lapse* which became the notorious policy of the Government of India during his regime. One of the motives underlying this policy was no doubt the extension of British territories, but there was also something to be said in favour of Lord Dalhousie's argument that "Government is not designed for the profit of the princes but for the welfare of the people". Looked at from the British standard, the administration of these princes, surrounded as they were by a miscellaneous collection of court intriguers, in the form of courtiers, courtesans and hangers-on, was full of vice and other degrading things. For themselves, therefore, the British thought that annexation was the only remedy for the malady.

The Doctrine of Lapse centred round the privilege of adoption. Every Hindu, under his personal law, is entitled, in the absence of a male heir of his body, to adopt a son from another family—a son who would perform the religious rites on death so that the deceased may have an easy time in the other world. The adopted son thus becomes the spiritual *persona* of the adoptive father, and succeeds to his property. In the case of the Indian princes, the British Government recognised this as a right so far as the succession to private property was concerned, but it was not recognised as a right for the succession to the *gaddi*. For the latter purpose, it had been laid down that where the government of the State was in question, the consent of the British Government as the paramount power was necessary to confirm such an adoption. It was further laid down that the paramount power had the legal right to withhold its assent if it thought fit to do so. In actual practice, however, this consent was withheld in all the cases which we now proceed to review.

Satara.

The principalitiy of Satara was the first to fall a prey to the Doctrine of Lapse. The territory of Satara had been carved out by the British on the break-up of the Maratha empire which followed the defeat of Baji Rao II in 1818. The last ruler of Satara had adopted a successor on his death-bed. Lord Dalhousie refused to recognise this adoption and incorporated the principality in the British dominions.

Jhansi.

Then came the turn of Jhansi. Jhansi had been ceded by Peshwa Baji Rao II to the East India Company in 1817. In 1832, the British created a local Subedar, by name Sheo Ram Bhao, as the Raja of Jhansi. He died childless a few years later. But the British Government did not take over the territory; they allowed a grand-uncle to succeed the deceased. This successor also dying childless, the British put another Raja in his place. This practice was, however, reversed in 1853, when Raja Gangadhar Rao died leaving no natural heir, but having adopted, before his death, a son according to strict Shastric rites. Lord Dalhousie, with the concurrence of the Home Government, decided not to recognise the adoption, the ostensible ground given being that previous successions had only caused mismanagement and an oppressive rule over a period of thirty years. But the old misrule, whatever may have been its extent, could not justly be pleaded on this occasion, because there was an able woman in the person of the widowed queen who could act as regent during the minority of the adopted child. Later, on his majority, the British could have used their influence in fostering good administration if the ruler himself was unworthy. However, the Company took possession of Jhansi in escheat, granting a pension to the Rani. It is said, however,

that she refused to draw the pension for some time as a protest against this high-handed action.

Nagpur.

This was another important State on which the Doctrine of Lapse was applied. It was conquered by the Poona Government in 1781. In 1818, when the Peshwaship disappeared, a portion of the old State was reconstituted by the Marquis of Hastings as a subordinate Indian State. Its ruler died in 1853 without a male heir or a legitimate daughter. He had refrained from adopting an heir during his life-time. After his death, one of his widows did so. The question then arose whether this adoption should be consented to by the British. Lord Dalhousie decided against the State being re-created in an artificial manner. The argument was that for the twenty years of his regime, the deceased Raja had wholly mismanaged his State and had left an unworthy name behind. In this context it may be mentioned that the deceased Raja had succeeded to the State when still a minor and so the territory was administered for some twelve years by the British Resident, Sir Richard Jenkins, whose administration was so good that it was called "the golden age of Nagpur". When he made over to the new Raja, who had now attained majority, the treasury was full ; a disciplined and well-paid army was at service ; the system of administration was excellent and the people contented. Lord Dalhousie's grief was that all these things had been undone by the late Raja. So the territory of Nagpur was incorporated in the Company's dominions.

Lord Dalhousie, however, respected the private rights of the family—he had the personal effects of the late Raja realized and out of them got created a fund, called *The Bhonsla Fund*, for the benefit of the family. The widows were treated with great courtesy. They and the other members of the family were allowed adequate pensions. But the way in which the Fund was formed brought protests from the ladies of the family and created an impression, in Berar and the surrounding provinces, entirely unfavourable to Government. In his characteristic rhetoric, Kaye describes the proceedings thus : "The livestock and deadstock of the Bhonsla were sent to the hammer. It must have been a great day for speculative cattle-dealers at Seetabaldee when the royal elephants, horses and bullocks were sold off at the price of carrion ; and a sad day, indeed, in the royal household, when the venerable Bankha Baee, with all the wisdom and moderation of four-score well-spent years upon her, was so stung by a sense of the indignity offered to her that she threatened to fire the palace if the furniture were removed. But the furniture was removed, and the jewels of the Bhonsla family, with a few propitiatory exceptions, were sent to the Calcutta market. And I have heard it said that these seizures, these sales, created a worse impression, not only in Berar, but in the surrounding provinces, than the seizure of the kingdom itself".*

The Nawab of Carnatic.

His domains were similarly attached in 1855 when he died without leaving any natural heir.

There were some other 'lapses', but they were of lesser importance and need no notice here.

The case of Nana Saheb.

This was also practically a case of 'lapse', though it did not come strictly within the scope of the written doctrine. It was a 'lapse', not of territory, but of pension. Till his death at Bithoor in 1851, Maharaja Baji Rao was in receipt of an annual pension of eight lakhs, granted by the Marquis of Hastings when the Peshwa's kingdom was

**History of the Sepoy War*, Vol. I, pp. 83-84.

brought under British administration. Baji Rao's adopted son, Nana Saheb, considered himself entitled at least to a part of the pension, but he received nothing. His several representations to the authorities were of no avail. Nana Saheb entertained a legitimate grievance against the Company's Government on this account.

H. ANNEXATION OF AVADH.

In addition to the application of the Doctrine of Lapse, other reasons were brought into service for the annexation of the territories of several rulers. During the time of Lord Dalhousie alone, territories equal to nearly twice the area of England and Wales were added to British India by the conquest, and consequent annexation, of the Punjab, Lower Burma and some outlying tracts of Sikkim. But these latter annexations had really no effect on the coming revolt—if anything the Province of the Punjab was regarded as "the saviour province of India". It was the annexation of Avadh which really contributed, and contributed in a large measure, to the great revolt.

The kingdom of Avadh was annexed on the alleged ground of misrule and tyranny on the part of King Wajid Ali Shah. In 1847, the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, came to Lucknow to warn the King to reform his administration within two years, failing which the British would, he said, assume the direct government of Avadh. Earlier warnings, some in the form of personal advice and some as threats, had been tendered to him by previous Governors-General on their visits to Lucknow. In 1851 and 1852 adverse reports had been submitted to the Governor-General by the Resident at Lucknow. In the last report, the Resident had reported in the sense that the State had been completely delivered over to anarchy and the cruellest form of oppression. Lord Dalhousie thereupon wrote to the Home Government that immediate action was needed as things that were happening were "already converting our responsibility into guilt". The Home Government decided that the King should be deposed and the State completely annexed. This extreme measure Lord Dalhousie had not recommended; he had suggested that while the administration should be taken over by the Company, the King himself may remain a ruler though only in name. However, Dalhousie carried out the orders of the Home Government without hesitation.

The kingdom of Avadh was the largest territory annexed by Lord Dalhousie. It was almost his last public act. Upon it, he wrote this minute: "The British Government would be guilty in the sight of man and God, if it would any longer aid in sustaining in all its kindness an administration fraught with suffering to millions. With this feeling on my mind and in humble reliance on the blessing of the Almighty, for millions of His creatures will draw freedom from the change, I approach the execution of this duty gravely but calmly and altogether without doubt".

King Wajid Ali Shah now sought his way* to reside at Calcutta as ordained by the Company. There he passed the rest of his

*The well-known couplet:

در و دیوار پہ حسرت سے نظر کرتے ہیں
خوش رہو اہل وطن ہم تو سفر کرتے ہیں

Dar-o-diwar pe hasrat se nazar karte hain,
Khush raho ahl-e-watan ham to safar karte hain,

was composed and recited by Wajid Ali Shah when, with a heavy heart, he was leaving the seat of his forefathers—the city of Lucknow which was so dear to him.

days in melancholy surroundings as a pensioner of the British Government. Lord Dalhousie put the administration of the new territories under a Chief Commissioner, with Sir James Outram, who was till now the Resident at Lucknow, as the first holder of the new office.

The big taluqdars were greatly agitated by the annexation. Under the late King, they had held positions of privilege which were now undone. The annexation also shook other princes and privileged classes who had previously not taken much notice of the annexations (under the Doctrine of Lapse) of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi.

The annexation of Indian States had another repercussion. The disbanded soldiers of the ex-rulers' armies were amongst the most disaffected persons who took a leading part in the rebellion because they had lost their livelihood. In Avadh alone, some 50,000 men of the ex-King's army had been disbanded and consequently left without means of support.

I. THE CRIMEA AND AFGHANISTAN.

Another cause of the revolt is traced to the great loss in prestige which the British people had suffered in the Crimea and in Afghanistan. The Crimean war, in which the British troops met heavy reverses in killed and wounded and underwent untold misery, has been dealt with in Chapter 12, relating to the State of England near 1857. The Afghanistan affair may be briefly described here.

It was the fear to their Indian empire which prompted the British to hold Russia and to that end they undertook the fateful Crimean War in 1854. Several years earlier, the same apprehension caused the British to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, but with disastrous results. Great Britain believed that Russia, with her Asiatic empire, had designs on India and that for that purpose the Russians meant to to use the Afghans to disturb British rule in India. Britain, therefore, aimed at keeping the Afghans friendly so as to checkmate the Russian plans.

In 1838, Russian agents had appeared at Kabul to negotiate with Dost Mohammad who had usurped power at Kabul. Lord Auckland was then the Indian Governor-General. With the approval of the Home Government, he despatched from India an army which captured Kandhar and Kabul (1839), took Dost Mohammad captive and put Shah Shuja, the rightful owner on the throne. Until 1841, the Afghans remained submissive. Then suddenly they took up arms, murdered the British Agent and captured all the military stores. The British army was thus rendered completely helpless. It had no alternative but to accept the offer, made by Dost Mohammad's son, of a safe conduct out of Afghanistan. There were about 6,000 souls, 4,500 soldiers (of whom about 700 were British, the remaining, Indian sepoys), and the rest camp-followers. All set off towards India. Thousands died of the bitter cold and hunger on the way; those who survived fell victims to the bullets of the hiding Afghans. Out of this large party, only a single person, Dr. Brydon, succeeded in struggling on his pony to the British garrison at Jalalabad, to tell the tale of horror.

This total disaster naturally gave a severe blow to British prestige. The sepoys and the disaffected elements in India began to entertain hopes that the British who, before this disaster and the subsequent Crimean catastrophe, were considered invincible, could easily be thrown out of India. The British tried to retrieve their prestige in 1842 by sending armies to Afghanistan to restore Shah Shuja. In this venture they succeeded, but no sooner did the British force depart

from Kabul than the Afghans slew Shah Shuja and installed Dost Mohammad again. In the result the British stood where they were prior to 1839.

J. OTHER CONTRIBUTORY CAUSES.

There is a general impression that the doings of Lord Dalhousie had laid the foundations for the outbreak which occurred a year after he left India. But though certain acts of Lord Dalhousie were unpopular, they were not, taken by themselves, enough to have provoked a rebellion of this magnitude. The truth is that his predecessors, Lord William Bentinck, Lord Amherst, Lord Auckland, Lord Ellenborough, had done things which the orthodox people in the country regarded as unwarranted interference in their cherished rights and privileges of antiquity. So it was that when the sepoys, after hearing of the accounts of British disasters in the Crimea and in Afghanistan, felt that the British could be easily overthrown, they took the first opportunity of rising. And, as things would have it, the greased cartridges ignited the inflammable material.

Bahadur Shah : The miserable condition of the Emperor Bahadur Shah and the royal family at Delhi has, generally speaking, not been adduced as a factor contributing to the rebellion. This is perhaps correct, because the old King, who had come to the throne in 1837, had practically compromised himself to the position of a mere pensioner, with all his prerogatives and privileges having been gradually taken away. The practice of the King receiving *nazar* from the Governor-General and the British Resident at his Court had been abolished. Also were ignored the time-honoured etiquettes of the Royal Court. The feeble Bahadur Shah now ageing in years had neither money nor men. He was a mere apology for sovereignty without any of its real attributes.

All that was now left to the old King were his royal titles and his palace in the Delhi Fort. The British were manoeuvring to deprive him of these too, but Bahadur Shah would not willingly yield them even in the face of a sentimental temptation. The British offered to recognise (in preference to the rightful claimant, the eldest son of the King) his minor son, Jawan Bakht, born of his young Queen Zinat Mahal, in his much advanced age. The Emperor, however, preferred his palace and titles. The British in their turn did not wish to use force and preferred to wait till the King passed away. That event, in view of his old age, did not seem far away.

As for the Princes of the royal family, brought up in a care-free atmosphere, they lived a life of ease and luxury which Bahadur Shah's pension enabled them to enjoy. They had neither the time nor the ability to think of taking up arms.

So, when the Meerut sepoys, after having mutinied, reached Delhi and asked the Emperor to assume command, he pleaded poverty and infirmity. It was against his inclination that the sepoys made him assume the reins of the empire on the midnight of May 11, 1857, with the firing of 21 guns. The Royal Princes, Mirza Mughal, Mirza Khizr Sultan and Mirza Abu Bakr, seized this possible opportunity, come to them by mere chance, of reviving the glories of the House of Taimur.

Reforms : The English, no doubt, conquered India by the sword, but having done so, they meant to mend the country in their own way and, indeed, with some good intentions. For this purpose they began to introduce all kinds of reforms, some of which were all right. But the Indian people, traditionally conservative in their ways of life and thinking, disliked these reforms, particularly because they thought that they were motivated by

the desire of the rulers to convert India into Christianity.

Places of Worship : Prior to 1839 the Company's officers were, according to old practice, looking after temples and mosques. The cost of the management was, of course, met out of the income derived from the pilgrims, any balance left over being retained by Government. The staunch believers in Christianity in England were, however, opposed to the association of the Company in idolatrous establishments. Yielding to the pressure of opinion at Home, the Company left the management of Hindu and Muslim shrines to their natural custodians. This caused some dissatisfaction, particularly when people found that Christian missionaries were supported and aided by the Company and that the chaplains in the army were in the pay of the Government.

Common messing : Yet another circumstance which aroused suspicion in the Indian mind was the introduction in 1835 of common messing in jails. Prior to that, the convicts were permitted to prepare their own food if their caste rules prohibited them from taking food prepared by others. The new regulation particularly hit the high caste Hindus because they had different sections amongst themselves and one section could not take the food prepared by another section. In the result, quite a number of convicts on release from prison found that they could not be taken back into their caste. The Muslims too were affected by prison regulations, but in a different way. On being sentenced to imprisonment, the Muslim convict's beard and moustache were cut immediately on his reaching the prison. The Muslims took this as a profound insult to their religion.

Centenary of Plassey : The year 1857 was also the centenary of the battle of Plassey which had laid the foundations of British rule in India. There was an old prophecy that the British rule would last for a hundred years after Plassey. That date had now come. This belief created a spirit of excitement amongst the discontented Bengal Army on the one hand and the people in general on the other. Some even thought that the wind whistling through the telegraph wires was 'bad-magic'.

Miscellaneous : Amongst other contributory causes mention may be made of the loss of the attraction which the Indian soldier had learnt to value in the service of the Company in the days when it had begun to acquire political supremacy in India. With this loss, his whole psychology towards his job changed. The gradual development of this state of his mind can be briefly stated.

With the advent of the British, the martial classes in Northern India were afforded an opportunity of service of a more stable character under the East India Company. With the decline of the central authority at Delhi, which followed the death of Aurangzeb, the country had divided itself into many kingdoms, each anxious to assert its sovereignty both against the neighbouring rulers as well as against the new aspirants to power. This gave rise to almost continuous war-fare, and the general life was unsettled. The life of the common soldier was no exception for, at the defeat of his master, he was usually left to himself. With the developing authority of the British in Indian territories, the soldier found greater stability of service under the East India Company and, as there were no feelings of nationalism binding the soldier to a national and central authority in the country, he naturally preferred the greater stability which the East India Company were able to provide. He served the Company with devotion and loyalty, and the consolidation of British power in India was largely attributed to the gallantry and sacrifice of the Indian soldier who enabled the Company to extend its dominions.

The British officers of the Company's army also treated the sepoy with consideration and took care of his personal difficulties.

Avenues of promotion were, of course, limited because the commissioned posts were all filled by British officers, and Indian soldiers, even after long and meritorious service, could not aspire to reach a rank higher than that of Subedar. As against this handicap in the Company's service, the soldiers in the army of an Indian ruler could rise to high ranks because all the posts were filled by Indians. Peace and contentment being the characteristics of Indian psychology, the sepoy under the Company felt nonetheless happy because he was at least assured of uninterrupted employment.

It was also the custom of British Army officers to fraternise with the Indian soldiers under his command. This was so because British officers had no other fields for recreation, no society, no commitments. It was also their practice to marry Indian ladies and to maintain their households more or less in the Indian fashion. The Indian soldier thus felt at home with his British officers, and fought with zeal for their cause.

As British power became consolidated and large tracts of rich territory were brought under the Company, the earlier uncertainties of life for British personnel were lessened a good deal. Consequently, it became the practice for British residents in India to bring their wives and daughters from England to live with them at their place of duty. The practice of European officers marrying Indian ladies began to decline in consequence. British military officers now had their own society, and gradually the contacts which existed between the Indian soldier and the British commander began to snap. And with that also snapped the feelings of cordiality and attachment which the Indian soldiers used to entertain towards British officers.

With the loosening of these bonds, which bound the officer and the soldier in a common purpose, the Indian soldier began to lose heart, and his affection for the British officers and British rule began to decline.

This was the general psychology of the Indian soldier when the story of the greased cartridge spread from one end of the army to the other.

K. THE AFFAIR OF THE GREASED CARTRIDGES.

While the sepoys and the civilians were thus so greatly disaffected for the reasons which have been discussed, and most of which were of long-standing, the occurrence of the revolt would have been delayed if a serious cause would not have provided the immediate opportunity for a general conflagration. The opportunity came in the form of the greased cartridge which lighted the accumulated bundle of grievances in the Indian Army. The greased cartridge was the complement of the new Enfield rifle which was found superior to the earlier makes and which was finally introduced in India in 1856, though it had been imported in the country some years previously. The news about the grease being made of objectionable fat started from Dumdum where there was a training centre for teaching the use of the new rifle to Indian sepoys. There, a low caste *laskar* taunted a high caste sepoy that the cartridge, which had to be bitten by teeth* before being put in the rifle, was smeared with the fat of cows and pigs. This news soon spread amongst all the sepoys serving in the Bengal Army. The sepoys at Dumdum registered a disciplined protest in January, 1857, after which the matter was brought to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief. Some half-started measures were taken by the Government to allay the sepoys' fears which were not

*The cartridges were greased at one end to make them slip readily into the barrel of the new rifle.

ill-founded because the grease, which had been supplied by the military contractors at Calcutta, did contain the fat of pigs and cows. This was, of course, against the specification in the contract by which they were to use mutton-fat only, but some of the contractors used instead the fat of pigs and bullocks in order to save a large sum on the transaction. But nothing effective was done to satisfy the sepoys, both Hindus and Muslims, who began to fear that the British were determined to deprive them of their religion. This was because the military authorities could not finally make up their mind as to what should be the final solution of the question.

Matters would have been mended had the Government at once withdrawn the cause of tension in its entirety. Instead of doing so, "the Government resolved that the sepoys at the depots should be allowed to use any mixture they might think fit but that the question of the state in which cartridges should be issued under other circumstances, and especially for service in the field, must remain open for further consideration".* This was, as could have been expected, ineffectual to check the growing excitement.

It is to be remembered, however, that though the greased cartridge was the immediate cause of the outbreak, the basic causes lay elsewhere—they arose from the nation's desire to get rid of foreign rule, the bitter flavour of which they had tasted for many long years. Thus, in the words of Colonel Malleson in his *The Indian Mutiny of* 1857 :

> "The greased cartridge was never issued to a great body of troops, if indeed to any. There must have been a latent motive power to make of an un-issued cartridge a grievance so intolerable as to rouse into revolt men whose fathers and whose forefathers' fathers have contributed to the making of the British Empire in India . . . . Circumstances had proved to me that extraneous causes were at work to promote ill-feeling and hatred, not personal but national, in the minds of men who for a century had been our truest and most loyal servants."

> "THE RECENT RESEARCHES OF MR. FORREST IN THE RECORDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PROVE THAT THE LUBRICATING MIXTURE USED IN PREPARING THE CARTRIDGES WAS ACTUALLY COMPOSED OF OBJECTIONABLE INGREDIENTS, COW'S FAT AND LARD, AND THAT INCREDIBLE DISREGARD OF THE SOLDIER'S RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES WAS DISPLAYED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF THESE CARTRIDGES."
>
> —LORD ROBERTS, *Forty-one Years in India.*

*Martin, *The Indian Empire*, volume II, p. 127.

PART TWO

THE REVOLT AND ITS SUPPRESSION

(Chapters 15 to 40)

Those who deny freedom to others,
Deserve it not for themselves.

A. Lincoln

LIBERTY IS ORDER; LIBERTY IS STRENGTH. IT IS POWER AND ORDER PREDOMINANT AND INVINCIBLE—IT DERIDES ALL OTHER SOURCES OF STRENGTH. THE PROGRESS OF LIBERTY IS LIKE THE PROGRESS OF THE STREAM—NO POWER CAN ARREST IT IN ITS PASSAGE.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE PLANNING AND THE PREPARATION : PART OF NANA SAHEB

A. WHETHER THE REVOLT WAS PRE-PLANNED : TOURS OF NANA SAHEB.

B. BAIZA BAI PASSES HER PART TO NANA SAHEB.

C. PART OF BAHADUR SHAH, THE QUEEN OF AVADH AND THE RANI OF JHANSI.

D. THE CLIQUE IN LONDON.

E. THE *CHAPATI* AFFAIR.

"In all countries and under all forms of Government, the dangers which threaten the State, starting in the darkness, make headway towards success before they are clearly discovered by rulers of the land. Often, so much time and space is gained, that the slow and complex action of authority cannot overtake the mischief and intercept its further progress."—SIR JOHN KAYE.*

A. WHETHER THE REVOLT WAS PRE-PLANNED : TOURS OF NANA SAHEB.

The question whether the revolt was pre-planned or whether it was merely a spontaneous rising of the sepoys in which certain disaffected noblemen and disaffected sections of the general population lent their active assistance, has not yet been conclusively answered. Two theories are in the field—one supports the existence of a well-formulated scheme for the whole country, while the other characterises it as a sudden uprising. Dr. Sen in his Eighteen Fifty-Seven endorses the latter view. So does Maulana Abul Kalam Azad when he says in his Foreword to that book that the uprising was not the result of careful planning nor were there any master-minds behind it—the outburst was created by the growing discontent of large numbers of people caused by a hundred years of the Company's rule, for which the Indian people had developed a distaste.

Nana Saheb's tours.

In April, 1857, Nana Saheb had visited, amongst other places, Lucknow also. This visit was said to have been a prelude to the

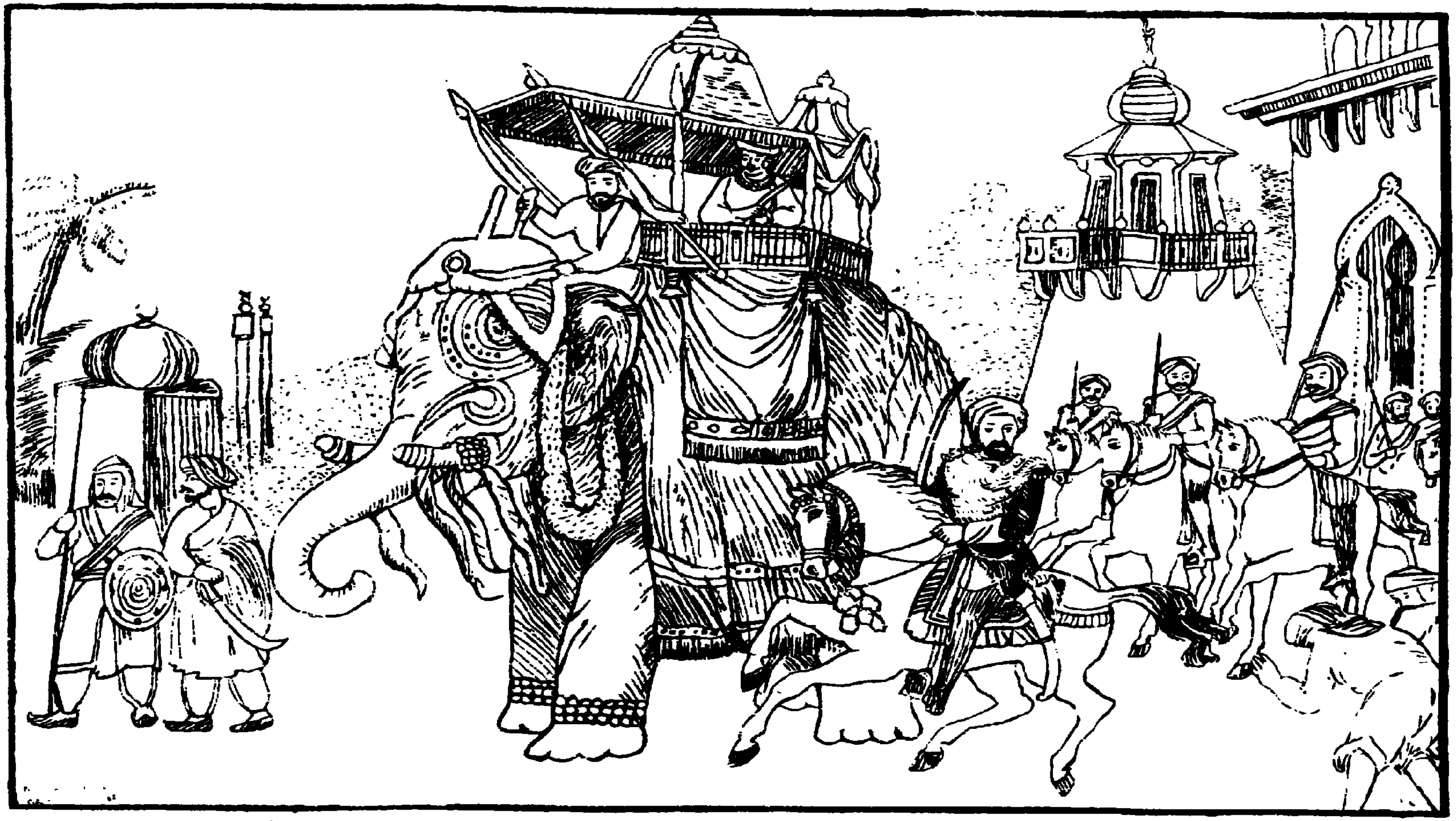
*Sepoy War in India, volume I, p. 509.

wide-spread revolt which was being planned. It has further been suggested that during this visit Nana Saheb contacted, under the pretext of seeing sights in Lucknow, the discontented noblemen of Avadh. The Chief Commissioner of Avadh, Sir Henry Lawrence, on whom Nana Saheb had made a courtesy call, was led to entertain suspicions about his intention. This visit has been thus described by Martin Gubbins : "I must here mention a visit which was made to Lucknow, in April, by the Nana of Bithoor, whose subsequent treachery and atrocities have given him a pre-eminence in infamy. He came over on pretence of seeing the sights at Lucknow, accompanied by his younger brother and a numerous retinue, bringing letters of introduction from a former Judge of Kanpur to Captain Hayes and to myself. He visited me, and his manner was arrogant and presuming. To make a show of dignity and importance, he brought six or seven followers with him into the room, for whom chairs were demanded. One of these men was his notorious agent, Azimullah. His younger brother was more pleasing in appearance and demeanour. The Nana was introduced by me to Sir Henry Lawrence, who received him kindly, and ordered the authorities of the city to show him every attention. I subsequently met him parading through Lucknow with a retinue more than usually large. He had promised before leaving Lucknow to make his final call on the Wednesday. On the Monday, we received a message from him that an urgent business required his attendance at Kanpur, and he left Lucknow accordingly. At the time his conduct excited little attention ; but it was otherwise when affairs had assumed the aspect which they did at Kanpur, by the 20th of May. His demeanour at Lucknow and sudden departure to Kanpur appeared exceedingly suspicious, and I brought it to the notice of Sir Henry Lawrence. The Chief Commissioner concurred in my suspicions, and by his authority I addressed Sir Hugh Wheeler, cautioning him against the Nana, and stating Sir Henry's belief that he was not to be depended on. The warning was unhappily disregarded, and, on the 22nd of May, a message was received stating that 'two guns and three hundred men, cavalry and infantry, furnished by the Maharaja of Bithoor, came in this morning'."

Nana Saheb's tours, according to Azimullah Khan's Diary, covered Varanasi, Allahabad, Baxar, Gaya, Janakpur, Parasnath, Jagannath Puri, Panchvati, Rameshwaram, Dwarka, Nasik, Abu, Ujjain, Mathura, Badrinath and Kamrup. It is further stated that great welcome was accorded to him everywhere on account of his sweet personality, and that all whom he met were impressed by his charms. In his tours, Nana Saheb was accompanied also by Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb. It is said that the first place visited by him was Delhi where he met the Emperor and his Queen, Begum Zeenat Mahal, and discussed secret plans. From Delhi he went to Ambala and after visiting other centres came to Lucknow in the month of April, 1857. The party then returned to Bithoor *via* Kalpi.

Nana Saheb is also said to have written letters to several Indian rulers referring to the unjust actions of the British, particularly their attack on Indian religion and the treatment of Indian rulers. He is also said to have sent out numerous persons in the guise of sadhus, faqirs and pilgrims. These men contacted the masses in bazars, melas and other places, inciting them against the Government. These men also entered the Army cantonments in the guise of moulvis and pandits to prepare the sepoys for mutiny. In the Diary of Azimullah Khan it is stated that during his tours Nana Saheb secretly informed the people that the revolt would start on May 31, 1857, throughout the country.

The theory that Nana Saheb was the planner of the scheme finds further support from the information published by Sri K. M. Munshi,

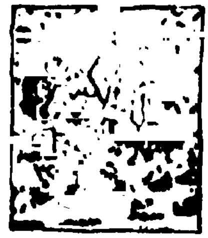


NANA SAHEB IN LUCKNOW

From a painting by a contemporary artist

In April 1857, Nana Saheb visited Lucknow. He was introduced to the Chief Commissioner, Sir Henry Lawrence, who "received him kindly and ordered the authorities of the city to show him every attention." A large retinue accompanied him as he passed through the streets of Lucknow. This picture shows him leaving the city.

Alleged seal of the Rani of Jhansi on the letter of March 1856 said to have been written by her to her family priest at Puri, which points to the Rani being engaged in the planning of the revolt. But this seal is entirely different from the proved design of her seal (see below). For this reason, coupled with the style and the other circumstances of the letter attributed to the Rani, doubts have been expressed about its authenticity.





The Rani's seal as it appears in several genuine documents.

the veteran statesman and the Kalapati of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay, and a former Governor of Uttar Pradesh. The information occurs in a letter, dated March 27, 1955, written in his capacity as Kulapati. It was written from Lucknow when he was Governor there. The letter was published in the Book University Journal, volume I, no. 17, under the title *The Portrait of an Aristocrat*, and contains an account of his grand-father Narberam Munshi. That gentleman had for sometime served in the British law courts at Broach and Surat, but subsequently at the early age of 32 had resigned his post in protest against some action taken by the authorities. He then settled down in his home town of Broach in Gujarat to manage his ancestral zamindari, and soon became the "undisputed monarch of the Munshi Heights". In this context may be read the following portion of Sri K. M. Munshi's letter :

"One morning in 1856, says the family tradition, grand-father was performing his puja in the little family shrine when Nana Saheb, the leader of the Great Revolt of 1857, came to see him in the guise of a Sadhu, who was busy collecting money for the campaign he was planning. After a whispered conversation it is said that grandfather gave him Rs.5,000.

"This incident was not a thing to be advertised; it was only mentioned in the family circle in whisper and even as forty years later when I was a boy. It certainly was not very safe to let it be known that a "Munshi of the Heights" had helped the leader of the Anti-British Revolt, but it shows what ostensibly pro-British Indians felt about the new foreign ruler. This incident came into my mind when people privately placed thousands of rupees at the disposal of the Congress leaders during the Bombay Satyagraha of 1930."

The above passage throws a new light on the life of Nana Saheb, because the belief so far has been that in 1856 Nana Saheb had undertaken a pilgrimage, but there is no suggestion in the published records that he travelled in the guise of a sadhu. Indeed, the available records say that he was accompanied by his friend and adviser, the celebrated Azimullah Khan, said to have been the brain behind the revolt. British writers have expressed some surprise that a Brahman of Nana Saheb's orthodoxy should have been accompanied in his pilgrimage by a Mohammedan. The published works also enumerate the places he visited, but there is no mention of Surat or Broach.

The tradition in the family of Sri K. M. Munshi is thus a valuable piece of evidence in the life of Nana Saheb. But as the account of this incident in the 'Kulapati's letter' was a very brief one, the present author wrote to Sri Munshi to inquire whether further details about Nana Saheb's visit to his illustrious grand-father were available. Sri Munshi was kind enough to send a reply on September 4, 1958, in which he stated : "This anecdote was handed down to me by my father and his eldest brother and sister who were adults when the incident happened. There is nothing beyond what I have stated in the Kulapati's letter."

B. BAIZA BAI PASSES HER PART TO NANA SAHEB.

There is another story according to which the conspiracy had been hatched by Maharani Baiza Bai, the widowed queen of the ruler of Gwalior, Daulat Rao Scindia, who had died in 1827, without leaving a male issue. She was a remarkable lady, full of ambition. In 1798, when in her 14th year, she had been married to Daulat Rao at Poona. She came of a high class family of Maharashtra and was noted for her beauty. Since her marriage, she took a hand in the management of her husband's State. She had many children, but they all died in infancy. On Daulat Rao's death, a minor relative of his, by name Jankoji Rao, was installed as the ruler with Maharani Baiza Bai as the regent. It appears that Baiza Bai was interested in another boy whom she wanted to be raised to the gaddi. To this end she created intrigues which resulted in disorders in the State. This led to her expulsion from Gwalior in 1833.

Baiza Bai was dissatisfied with the British Government and the story goes that in about 1837, she secretly got into touch with the principal princes of India with designs against the British. In the meanwhile, however, in 1843, Jankoji Rao Scindia died without issue and a minor named Jiyaji Rao, in whom Baiza Bai was interested, was raised to the gaddi. Having thus been satisfied she is said to have then withdrawn from the conspiracy.

Maharani Baiza Bai lived to a ripe old age, dying in 1863 after experiencing many vicissitudes of fortune. She had planned to perform a grand *yagna* at Mathura in 1857 in which eight lakhs of rupees were meant to be spent in charities and religious rites. It was to take part in this that Vishnu Datt Godse, a Brahman priest of Maharashtra, had set out from his home near Poona a short time before the outbreak of the 'mutiny'. A first-hand account of the happenings at Jhansi, Gwalior and many other places has been written by him in his famous Marathi book *Majha Pravas* (*My Journey*). The Maharani could not perform this *yagna* as the revolt had broken out in the meanwhile.

The story further has it that, after Baiza Bai had withdrawn from the intrigue, Nana Saheb stepped into her shoes. On the advice of one Dassa Baba, who was supposed to possess some magical powers, Nana Saheb got a small idol of lotus seeds prepared which was then divided into small fragments. These fragments were then placed in chapatis which were distributed far and near. Dassa Baba assured Nana Saheb that his influence would prevail wherever the enchanted chapatis were circulated. Further items in the plan were a simultaneous night attack on all military stations in India, the extermination of all English males (their women and children were to be protected from harm); the Ruler of Rewa was to take hold of Varanasi from where he was to attack Bengal.

In this conspiracy the Maharaja of Mysore, several other princes of the South and a minister of the Hyderabad Darbar were said to have been associated on account of the influence of Dassa Baba who was said to be the prime mover in this country-wide scheme of extermination. The Baba had his headquarters in the Punjab, but he had sent one of his disciples in the guise of a *bairagi* to South India. The plan was said to have been financed by Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Seth Lachmi Chand of Mathura.

These particulars had been brought to the notice of the Government by Sita Ram Baba, an anchorite, who had been interrogated for a week from January 18 to 25, 1858, by the Judicial Commissioner of Mysore. The Governor-General directed the matter to be further enquired into, and for this purpose a copy of Sita Ram's statement was sent to the Agents to the Governor-General in Central India and Hyderabad and to the Governments of the Punjab and Bombay.* The result of the enquiry is not clearly known ; so Sita Ram's story cannot be said to have been disproved even though his account was possibly treated everywhere in a light-hearted manner.

As against these versions, several historians have held that Nana Saheb was a person of ordinary brains and average capacities, and, for that reason, could not have planned and undertaken such a gigantic task as a country-wide rebellion. Even in respect of the Kanpur affair, writers have suggested that he had been coerced into becoming the head of the rebel troops. Or, if the theory is correct that the troops who were on their march to Delhi had been brought back from Kalyanpur, even then it is suggested that it was not Nana Saheb who so counselled the sepoys, but his adviser Azimullah Khan

*Foreign Secret Consultations, Nos. 341–46, May 28, 1858.

and his co-workers. Their point is that Nana Saheb had no brains for organisation. For instance, Sherer writes that he was "inanimate, incapable of original ideas, and more elated perhaps with the present glory of a hundred guns fired in his honour, than with any distinct idea of future dominion."*

In regard to the troops at Kanpur, Nanak Chand in his Diary has recorded that before the actual outbreak Nana Saheb had tampered with the sepoys and won their confidence after several secret conferences. But this has been questioned by Sherer who holds that Nana Saheb was not clearly in league with the sepoys, for had that been the case "it would not have been necessary for him to pursue them down the road and entreat them with lavish promises to return."† In his report on the events of Kanpur, Mr. Thornhill, Commissioner, Allahabad Division, had also come to the same conclusion by observing that "had any understanding existed between the Nana and the troops, there would have been no object in the march they made on the Delhi road."‡ Dr. Sen supports these conclusions and observes that the logic of events indicates that the sepoys felt the need of a leader of a high rank and played upon the ambition and fear of the Nana who then placed himself at their head after some hesitation.

C. PART OF BAHADUR SHAH, THE QUEEN OF AVADH AND THE RANI OF JHANSI.

It has been held by some writers that Emperor Bahadur Shah was in league with Iran where he had sent his envoys. A proclamation purporting to have come from the Shah of Iran was actually found displayed at the Jami Masjid during the uprising at Delhi. Dr. Sen, however, attaches no importance to this occurrence, suggesting that the proclamation could have easily been fabricated by some dissatisfied individual. In any case, this isolated incident does not, in his opinion, prove the existence of a conspiracy between the Emperor and the Shah.

The Shah of Iran was not on good terms with England. In February, 1857, a British force under the command of General Sir James Outram had attacked and defeated an Iranian army on the soil of that country. A few months earlier in December, 1856, the British army and navy had occupied certain territories in Iran, including Bushire. The Governor-General in Council was so much gratified by this success that he ordered the firing of a Royal Salute from the ramparts of Fort William at Calcutta and at every principal military station in India "in honour of the signal success which has attended the first operation of the British Forces on the Coast of Persia."

There is little doubt that some contacts with the Shah of Iran had been established by the Princes of the royal family. These were the grandsons of Mirza Sulaiman Shikoh, a grandson of Shah Alam II. Sulaiman Shikoh had taken refuge in the Court of the King of Avadh and had embraced the Shia faith to which the dynasty of the Lucknow Nawabs belonged. They are said to have carried on some secret correspondence with the Shah of Iran in order to bring about an understanding between the Emperor and the Iranian ruler, who was the temporal head of the Shia sect. One Sidi Kambar was said to have gone to Iran with letters from the Emperor. The Shah was not on friendly terms with the British (who had opened a campaign in Iran) and felt that disturbances

*Havelock's March on Kanpur.

†Report on Kanpur, dated January 13, 1859, page 8.

‡Paragraph 6 of his letter to Government, North-Western Provinces, no. 268, dated April 28, 1859.

against the British in India would be helpful to him. Argument is lent to the intrigue between Persia and India by the fact that Mr. Murray, the British Ambassador in Persia, had written to Lord Canning stating that a high-ranking Persian officer had admitted writing letters to the Muslim chiefs in Northern India, inciting them to insurrection.* In his learned work, Dr. Sen has, however, expressed doubts about the existence of any understanding between the Emperor and the Shah for the subversion of British power. The point cannot, however, be treated as having been conclusively established one way or the other and can well be left in the hands of research scholars.

Another suggestion that has been put forward is that the ex-Queen of Avadh, Begam Hazrat Mahal, had sown the seeds of the coming rebellion. On annexation, the deposed Wajid Ali Shah had to leave Lucknow to go to reside at Calcutta and with him went many members of his family and adherents. But Queen Hazrat Mahal with her son, Prince Birjis Qadar, stayed behind. She was a courageous and talented lady. There was no wonder that she exploited the disaffected nobles of the Court and the people of Avadh in order to regain the throne for her son who was still a boy.

Recently, a letter has been discovered purporting to have been written by the Rani of Jhansi to her family priest at Puri. This letter is dated March, 1856. According to it the Rani had been engaged in organising the revolt one full year before the Meerut uprising in May, 1857. Dr. Sen has, however, doubted the authenticity of this letter and has come to the conclusion that it is a fabrication. His reason is that the letter purports to have been written from Meerut, but there is no evidence that the Rani had been to that place in March, the month mentioned in the letter, or at any other time. Again, that the letter refers to the greased cartridges, but these had not come to India before November, 1856, nor had the sepoys heard of them until January, 1857. The seal of the letter is also different from that used in the authentic letters of the Rani. It is also Dr. Sen's view that the form and the style of the letter itself are quite unlike those which the Rani was accustomed to use. These reasons do not, however, conclusively establish that it is a forged document. The case requires further scrutiny. If it is eventually found that this is the only piece of evidence regarding the Rani's plans then, having regard to Dr. Sen's analysis, the theory that the Rani had a hand in organising the revolt would perhaps have to be given up.

D. THE CLIQUE IN LONDON

Before Nana Saheb received the reply from the Court of Directors in London rejecting his memorial for pension, he had sent Azimullah Khan to England to plead his case with the Home authorities. He reached London in the summer of 1853 and prosecuted the claim in conjunction with Mr. Biddle, an Englishman. As the Directors had already decided to uphold their earlier decision, the mission failed.

Kaye records that though outwardly Azimullah Khan was "a gay, smiling, voluptuous sort of person", he was inwardly brooding over unexpressed feelings. It was in this condition that Rango Bapuji, who was still resident in England then, was attracted towards Azimullah Khan. Rango Bapuji, a person of rare ability and perseverance, had been to England to plead the case of the Satara Princes for the restoration of the principality which had been annexed in 1848 on the death of the last ruler, Shahaji, without an issue. However, he too, like Azimullah Khan, did not succeed in his

*Punjab Government Records, Delhi Division, Political, 1858, File no. 19.

venture. In their disappointment both persons are said to have planned schemes against the British. Kaye himself has hinted at this possibility by observing: "Though of different race and of different religion, these two men were knit together by common sympathies and kindred tasks, and in that autumn of 1853, by like failures and disappointments, to brood over, and the same bitter animosities to cherish. What was said and what was done between them no historian can relate. They were adepts in the art of dissimulation."

Several Indian writers have held that these two gentlemen had in fact prepared a scheme to be put into action on their return to India, Azimullah Khan in the north and Rango Bapuji in the south.* Azimullah Khan returned *via* the Crimea and had occasion to see with his own eyes the British disaster in front of Sebastopol. He had also been to Constantinople before finally coming back to India.

E. THE CHAPATI AFFAIR

Early in 1857, there was a mysterious but open distribution of chapaties from village to village in many districts of northern India and in certain areas of the present Madhya Pradesh. The fact was reported to the authorities from various quarters. The first person to draw attention to the subject was the Magistrate and Collector of Gurgaon, who in a letter of February 19, 1857, thus informed the Commissioner of Delhi: "I have the honour to inform you that a signal has passed through a number of villages of this district, the purport of which has not yet transpired. The chowkidars of the villages bordering on those belonging to Muttra have received small baked cakes of *atta*, with orders to distribute them generally through this district. A chowkidar upon receiving one of these cakes has had five or six more prepared, and thus they have passed from village to village; so quickly has the order been executed that village after village has been served with this notice. This day, cakes of this description have arrived and been distributed in the villages about Gurgaon and an idea has been industriously circulated that Government has given the order."

In one case a District Officer saw a person arriving in a village with chapaties, breaking them into pieces and distributing them amongst the men of the village. The District Officer asked him the meaning of this, thereupon the reply was given that there was an old custom in Hindustan that when their *malik* or chief required any service from his people, he adopted this mode to prepare them for receiving his orders. He added that everyone who partook of the chapaties was held pledged to obey the order whenever it might come and whatever it might be. When the officer asked him what in the present case was the nature of the order, the man told him with a suspicious smile, 'we do not know yet.'

It was stated that the distribution of chapaties had been first started in Avadh in February, 1857. It began thus: A chowkidar ran up from his own village to another with two chapaties. Arriving there he contacted the chowkidar of the village visited and asked him to make ten more and to give two to each of the five nearest village chowkidars with the same instructions. The movement spread with such rapidity that it was estimated that within ten days every

*Rango Bapuji had stayed in England for several years even after the failure of his mission. He was now without funds because the Satara Princes had no further interest in him. He was involved in debt and the authorities of the East India Company, in spite of the troubles which he had given them over the Satara case, repaid his debts and, in addition, gave him £2,500 and a free passage to India. He returned in December, 1853.

village chowkidar in Avadh would have received his quota of chapaties and to have made and passed on similar cakes to other chowkidars within the radius of his travels. The Magistrate tried to stop this process ; still it passed along to the borders of the Punjab.

There are other versions also about the place of origin of these chapaties. It was stated that they were originated by some intriguers in the old court of Lucknow. William Edwards of the Bengal Civil Service, who was for some time Judge of Varanasi and later Collector of Budaun, thought that they possibly originated in Barrackpur. This is what he writes in his "Personal Adventures during the Indian Rebellion in Rohilkhand, Futtehgarh and Oudh", (London 1858): "The leaders and promoters of this great rebellion, whoever they may have been, knew well the inflammable condition, from these causes, of the rural society in the North-Western Provinces, and they therefore sent among them the chapaties, as a kind of fiery cross, to call them to action. The cakes passed with the most amazing rapidity over the length and breadth of the land. Where they came from originally, it is impossible to say, but I believe Barrackpur was the starting point, where large masses of mutinous sepoys were congregated. The chapaties entered my district from the adjoining one of Shahjahanpur ; a village watchman of that place giving to the watchman of the nearest Budaun village two of the cakes, with an injunction to make six fresh ones, retain two for his own, and give the others to the watchman of the next village, who would follow the same course, and continue the manufacture and distribution. I truly believe that the rural population of all classes, among whom these cakes spread, were as ignorant as I was myself of their real object ; but it was clear they were a secret sign to be on the alert, and the minds of the people were through them kept watchful and excited. As soon as the disturbances broke out at Meerut and Delhi, the cakes explained themselves, and the people at once perceived what was expected of them."

Another version was that the first circulation was made at the suggestion of a holy saint who had told Raja Beni Madho Singh of Shankergarh in Avadh that the people would rise in rebellion after chapaties were distributed and the person in whose name the cakes were sent would rule over the whole of India.

The authorities ordered inquiries to be made. Nothing tangible, however, could be traced as to their original object and they were allowed to travel from village to village with little or no hindrance. In the course of the investigation, it was found that some 50 years back two similar occurrences had taken place in Central India, one case being of the distribution of sugar (1806) and the other of the distribution of cocoanuts (1818). On both occasions the authorities had been perplexed, but no solution of the mystery had been found. Nothing particular had happened as a result of those distributions ; it was thought to have been merely a meaningless or accidental activity.

The distribution of chapaties on the present occasion had no doubt perplexed the authorities, but they were unable to connect it with any political event—past, present or future. From the point of view of the Government it was thought to be of no significance. There had been a cholera epidemic in certain districts some months back and it was thought that the distribution might possibly be a superstitious spell against the disease. Others thought that it arose from some other freak of superstition on the part of ignorant Indians. But the whole country was filled with forebodings of some impending calamity. Many old Indian gentlemen looked at the chapati affair with grave concern, but the authorities did not care.

The purpose of the circulation of chapaties has not so far been clearly established. Different people have put divergent interpretations about the object of the campaign. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan thought that the circulation of chapaties was a talisman to ward off the cholera epidemic which was prevailing at that time in the North Western Provinces and other parts of northern India.

The chapati campaign was wide-spread and could not have been initiated and organised by any ordinary person. There must have been some dominating minds behind it, and if this is accepted then the affair cannot be lightly dismissed as being a meaningless pose. Some have suggested that if any connection existed between the chapaties and the subsequent 'mutiny', it was only accidental. Dr. Sen has closed the affair by remarking : "A conspiracy is not conducted through such an unintelligible and uncertain medium of communication when it did not demand much ingenuity to find a more effective device. The Government would not have failed to discover some evidence if chapaties had a political motive behind them."* But this observation does not get at the root of the matter. While it can be conceded that the distribution of chapaties might have been a crude way of informing the people of what was to come and of enlisting their support, it does not rule out the possibility that this method, crude as it was, was adopted as an effective procedure for securing the sympathy of the people to the oncoming events.

"BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO DESCRIBE THE WONDERFUL SECRECY WITH WHICH THE CONSPIRACY WAS CONDUCTED . . . . AND THE CAUTION WITH WHICH EACH GROUP OF CONSPIRATORS WORKED APART, CONCEALING THE CONTROLLING LINKS, AND INSTRUCTING THEM WITH JUST SUFFICIENT INFORMATION FOR THE PURPOSE IN VIEW. AND ALL THIS WAS EQUALLED ONLY BY THE FIDELITY WITH WHICH THEY ADHERED TO EACH OTHER."—GEORGE LE GRAND JACOB, *Western India.*

*Dr. Sen, pages 399—400.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HOW THE REVOLT BEGAN—SELF-SACRIFICE OF MANGAL PANDEY

A. ANTECEDENTS OF MANGAL PANDEY

B. THE INCIDENT

C. COURT-MARTIAL AND END

A. ANTECEDENTS OF MANGAL PANDEY

Thus the plans, as has been stated earlier, were made by the sepoys and their leaders for a general uprising all over the country on May 31, 1857. Secret preparations were afoot in all Indian regiments of the Bengal Army and information was being secretly disseminated through trusted messengers. It is a matter of much significance and great astonishment that, notwithstanding the whispering campaign going on throughout northern India for the contemplated uprising and the distribution of loaves and lotus, the British officers were completely ignorant about it. After the restoration of the Company's authority, it was, however, brought out that one or two British officers had suspected that a general rebellion was in the offing and that it was scheduled to take place on May 31, 1857.

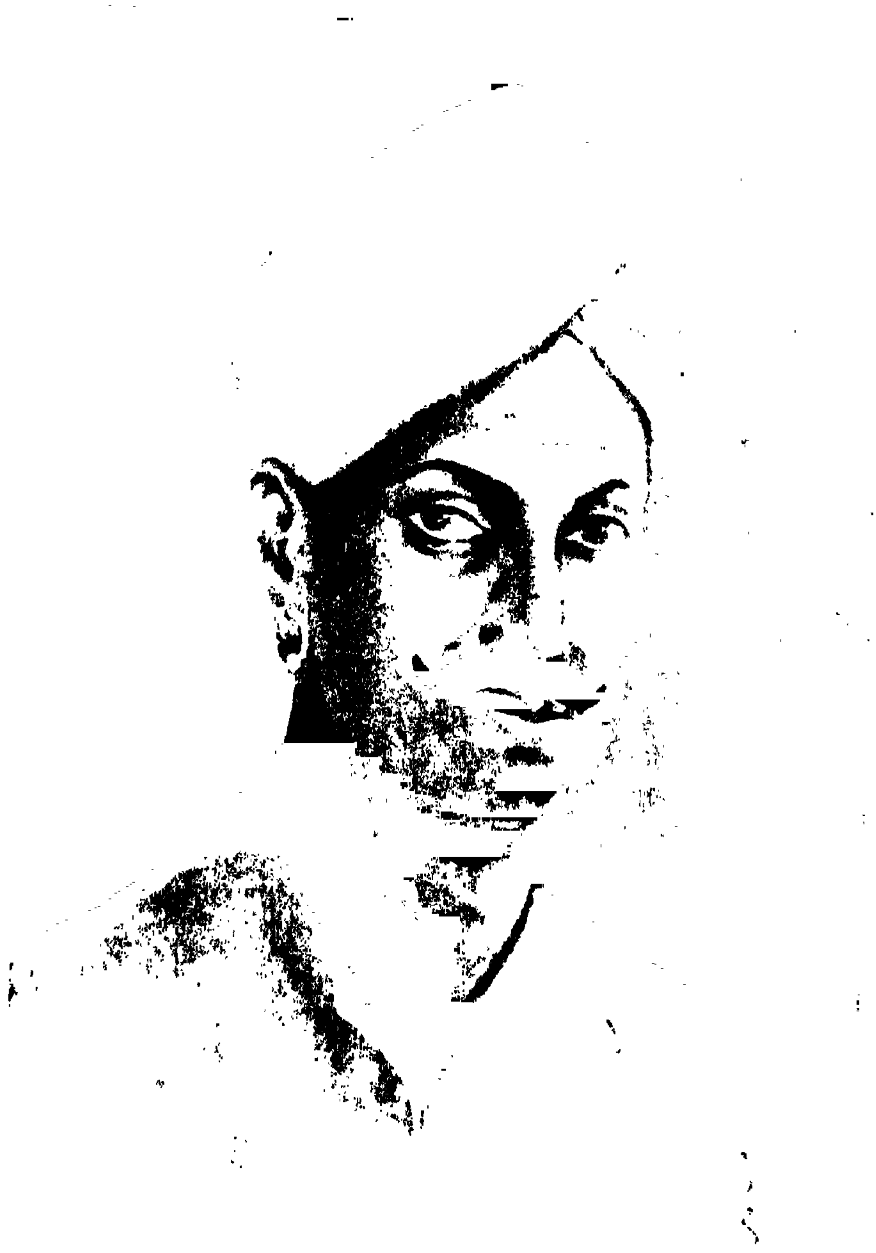
The 'Mutiny' actually broke out on May 10, 1857, that is twenty-one days in advance of the scheduled date, the Meerut regiments being the first to fire the shots. This was caused by the self-sacrifice of Mangal Pandey.

Mangal Pandey, a Brahman by caste, was a young sepoy of the 34th* Native Infantry stationed at Barrackpur. There were no British troops there. He was an intensely religious person and was regular in the observance of his worship and morning ablutions. He had a good reputation, and the officers of his regiment thought him to be an excellent person.† In his subsequent trial, a British Captain, who gave evidence for the prosecution, candidly admitted that Mangal Pandey's conduct and character were good, that apart from having received a warning he had never before been punished. He was between 26 and 27 years of age and had put in a service of some seven years.

The birth-place of Mangal Pandey was village Surhurpur in tahsil Akbarpur of the Faizabad district. His father's name was Divakar Pandey. Mangal was very robust and very tall. It is said that one day when, at Akbarpur, he was watching a regiment of the Company marching on the road from Varanasi to Lucknow, an officer impressed by his physique asked him to join the army to which the courageous youth at once consented. It is also said that his real nephew, Brijbhan Pandey, had also taken

*Some historians have taken Mangal Pandey to be a soldier of 19th Native Infantry. But Kaye, Dr. Sen and others have accepted him as a sepoy of 34th Native Infantry.

†Kaye speaks of him as "a man of good character, but of an excitable disposition".



[illegible]

[illegible] Calcutta [illegible]



MANGAL PANDEY BAZAR, MEERUT

This is the fruit and vegetable market near Begum Bridge Meerut, which a grateful people have named after the great hero

part in the rebellion, that after the re-establishment of British authority he had disappeared along with Raja Debi Baksh Singh.*

B. THE INCIDENT

The incident in which Mangal Pandey was involved took place in the afternoon of March 29, 1857, which was a Sunday. On that day, there had been considerable excitement in the regiment as a direct result of the arrival of some European soldiers and there was also a rumour that more would be soon coming. The excitement arose from the idea that the British troops were coming to assist in the disarming of the 19th Native Infantry which was stationed at Berhampur and which was being brought to Barrackpur for being disarmed on account of their refusal to bite the greased cartridges. The disarming was to take place at Barrackpur on the morning of Tuesday, March 31, in the presence of the troops, European and Indian. This had been publicly proclaimed to the whole Army by a general order.

This circumstance, coupled with the story of the greased cartridges as a result of which the 19th Native Infantry was soon to be disbanded, was the common talk amongst Indian soldiers. Mangal Pandey's mind was excited by all this and he determined not to wait for the fixed date which was far off. He wore his uniform, took his musket and came out of his barrack giving a call to his co-sepoys to follow suit in case they did not wish to bite the contaminated cartridges and become infidels. He took his position at a distance of some twenty yards from the quarter-guard where Jamadar Ishwari Pandey with his twenty sepoys was on guard duty. Sergeant Major Hughson on seeing this, ordered the sepoys to arrest him. But none moved. Before anything further could be done by Hughson, Mangal Pandey fired at him. The Sergeant Major was wounded. Just at this time came Lieutenant Baugh on his horse, but Mangal Pandey lost no time in aiming at him too. The bullet struck the horse, and brought the Lieutenant on the ground. But promptly he was on his feet and the next moment there was a fight with swords between Mangal Pandey and the two officers. Mangal Pandey, a valiant and powerful soldier, would have finished both the officers but for the assistance of Sheikh Paltoo who ran to intervene and seized Mangal Pandey by the waist. The fatal blows at these officers were thus averted.†

General Hearsay

In the meanwhile news was carried to General Hearsay, the officer commanding the Presidency Division, and residing at the station. He soon arrived at the scene of occurrence. The General on horse-back was accompanied by his two sons, both army officers. One of them, John Hearsay, shouted, warning his father that Mangal Pandey was aiming at him. "If I fall, John ! rush upon him and put him to death", said the old General with cool composure.

Mangal Pandey was now left in no doubt that his capture was imminent. In order to save himself from being arrested and put to indignities later, he made a bold attempt to commit suicide. He placed the butt of his musket on the ground, applied its muzzle to his breast and discharging it by the pressure of his foot fell burnt and wounded to the ground.

*Amrit Lal Nagar's *Gadar Ke Phul* (1957), pages 74-75 and 79-80.

†Kaye: "But Mangal Pandey was a desparate man and the strokes of his tulwar fell heavily upon his assailants; and he might have perhaps dispatched them both, if a Mohammedan sepoy of the Grenadier Company, named Sheikh Paltoo, had not seized the mutineer and averted his blows".

Those present thought that the convulsing and shivering Pandey was dying. No one dared to approach, however, until the regimental surgeon came, and he came promptly. The wound was found to be not fatal, and Mangal was at once removed to the hospital where he soon recovered.

The influence of Mangal Pandey

It appears that Mangal Pandey was held in esteem and affection by the sepoys for, at great risk to their future, none moved to capture him, except Sheikh Paltoo. Even Sheikh Paltoo released him from his grasp after a short time, although the reason for this, the Sheikh said in his evidence, was that he himself, becoming wounded, could no longer hold his captive. It is also in evidence that when Hughson and Baugh were engaged with Mangal Pandey the sepoys of the quarter-guard, in order to help him, beat the two officers with the butt-ends of their muskets, apart from a shot, which missed the aim, fired at the two officers. Shouts had also been raised that no one should touch Mangal Pandey, that none should even touch the hair of his sacred body.

C. COURT-MARTIAL AND END

Mangal Pandey was tried before a court-martial on April 6. During the trial he refused to give the names of other conspirators, adding that he had no personal malice against the British officers whom he had shot.

The military court consisted of 15 members, including the president, all Indians, drawn from the army. Subedar Major Jawahar Lal Tewari was the President. When asked by the Judge-Advocate whether he had any objection to the constitution of the court, Mangal Pandey replied in the negative. The charges against him were :

(i) that on March 29, 1857, he incited the sepoys to mutiny by arriving with arms at the parade ground, and that he opposed his officers, and

(ii) that he wounded his officers Sergeant-Major Hughson and Lieutenant Baugh, by gun-shot and sword.

To the court's query whether he pleaded guilty or not Mangal Pandey pleaded not guilty. Witnesses for the prosecution were then produced and these included Sergeant-Major Hughson, Lieutenant Baugh and Havaldar Sheikh Paltoo. They described the happenings and the part each had played. On his part, Mangal Pandey did not produce any witness in defence, nor cross-examined any of the prosecution witnesses.

The court's decision was pronounced the same day in the evening. Having been found guilty of both the charges he was sentenced to be hanged by the neck till dead. The next day the sentence was, as required by law, endorsed and confirmed by Major-General Hearsay in his capacity as Officer Commanding the Presidency Division.

The end

The execution was fixed for the next day, April 8. But it is on record that no person of Barrackpur was prepared to execute the gallant soldier. Four executioners had to be brought from Calcutta for the purpose. Surrounded by soldiers, Mangal Pandey was carried to the place where he was to die. Walking through the ranks, he ascended the scaffold with steady steps. He died repeating once more that he would not give out the names of any of his comrades.*

The other person who was hanged a few days later on April 11, in connection with

*Savarkar.

the incident, was Jamadar Ishwari Pandey in charge of duty at the quarter-guard. He was condemned because he failed to check Mangal Pandey from his mutinous conduct although he had been carrying on his incitement in front of the quarter-guard. As a result of the rebellious conduct of Mangal Pandey and the disloyalty of the sepoys, the 34th Native Infantry was disbanded early in May 1857, on the ground that it could not be trusted.

In course of time, the name *Pandey* became a recognised distinction for the rebellious sepoys throughout India.*

Causes of Excitement of Mangal Pandey

Kaye has accepted the version that "intoxicated as he was by *bhang,* which is to the sepoy what strong drink is to the European soldier, he was no longer master of himself". Dr. Sen, however, has considered it unnecessary to take up this question because in any case there was no antecedent conspiracy and that Mangal Pandey had not taken other sepoys into his confidence.

Doubts have, however, been raised about Mangal Pandey being intoxicated; he himself appears to have denied this. The question would thus bear a little discussion and some examination. In the first place, there is a basic difference in the intoxication resulting from *bhang* and that from wine. *Bhang* brings a somewhat sober effect on the addict in comparison to wine. It has often been heard that under the influence of wine, people have lost their balance of mind and committed crimes, but it has rather been heard rarely, if at all, that a person intoxicated by *bhang,* has indulged in violent criminal deeds. The effect of *bhang* is closely allied to that of opium.

Had Mangal Pandey acted under intoxication, it is quite natural that, as soon as the incident was over, or in any case when he was back to his senses, he would have lamented for what he had done. There is no force of character in a person acting under intoxication; he becomes apologetic, especially when he knows the fatal consequences of his unbalanced action.

There is no evidence to show that Mangal Pandey ever apologised for his action. Even in his last message, he exhorted his countrymen to avenge the dishonour of the nation.

The very fact that he tried to commit suicide proves that he was in his senses and that, in order to avoid future humiliations which he could very well visualize, he wanted to end his life.

It is possible that Mangal Pandey might have been used to taking *bhang* every day in a small quantity as a tonic, though it is still doubtful whether facilities could be available in a regiment for preparing *bhang* which involves a process and some time. Even then, to say that, used as he was to taking *bhang* every day, he should lose control of himself on that fatal day seems unbelievable. In any case, it seems all the more beyond credence that his fury should have been especially directed towards his British officers (against whom he bore no personal grudge), and towards no other person.

Thus, there is much doubt in the argument that Mangal Pandey took arms in a state of mental imbalance caused by intoxication. In his evidence before the military court Sheikh Paltoo had stated that, though Mangal Pandey used to take *bhang,* he could not say whether at the time of the occurrence he was actually intoxicated or not. This lends strong support to the view that he was not, because Sheikh Paltoo an Indian as he was knew the behaviour of bhang-takers and would have been left in no doubt if Mangal Pandey had actually been under its influence on that eventful afternoon.

*This name was the origin of the sepoys generally being called *Pandeys*—Lord Roberts, *Forty-one years in India.*

In fact, the excitement of Mangal Pandey had its inspiration from other sources, viz. :

(a) the impending disbandment of 19th Native Infantry on account of their protest to use the greased cartridges ;

(b) the humilities which the sepoys of 19th Native Infantry had undergone for the protest ;

(c) the arrival of European troops on the fateful day, and

(d) the apprehension that more Europeans would be arriving to replace the Indian soldiers.

Movement gets a new turn

Be it as may, the lead given by Mangal Pandey was followed by other regiments. According to Dr. Sen, "the attack made by Mangal Pandey at Barrackpur, which in a large measure was imitated by military corps at Meerut, had given the sepoy-movement a new turn".

It has sometimes been said that by firing shots before the appointed time, Mangal Pandey caused harm to the whole mutiny. But to assume that had the mutiny taken place on 31st of May, 1857, the British authority would have been liquidated is too far-fetched an expectation. In the first place, there was no leadership for the movement as a whole ; secondly, the foundations were so weak and poor that any edifice erected on them would have crumbled on the first blow received by it.

Further, it was also quite probable that, but for a man of Mangal Pandey's courage, who could bell the cat, all the preparations would have just remained mere "preparations", and 1857 would have remained an un-written chapter of Indian history. There was also the probability that by May 31, the British would have become aware of the coming events and would have crushed the movement in the bud.

Thus Mangal Pandey fired the first bullet of the 1857 movement. His self-sacrifice gave the siren to the nation to take up arms against an alien ruler, culminating in a mass up-rising with no parallel in world history. Though the effort failed in its immediate consequences, it succeeded in laying the foundations of the Independence to be won in 1947.

"HERE WAS FIRED THE FIRST SHOT DURING THE MOVEMENT OF 1857." *So runs the inscription on the Memorial Column at Barrackpur, near Calcutta, where Mangal Pandey yielded his last breath. Within sight of it stands the old banyan tree on which the gallant patriot was hanged.*

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MUTINY AT MEERUT—SPREAD OF THE REVOLT

A. MEERUT RISES.

B. ACTION AT CALCUTTA.

C. PLACES AFFECTED ; PSYCHOLOGY OF PRINCES.

D. CHRONOLOGY OF THE REBELLION.

A. MEERUT RISES.

Between the martyrdom of Mangal Pandey on April 8, 1857, and the progress of the revolt following the uprising at Meerut, there was an interval of a bare month. Before mounting the gallows, Mangal Pandey had warned his comrades to take a lesson from his death. His regiment (the 34th) was later disbanded at Barrackpur early in May, 1857. The uniforms of the disbanded sepoys were stripped from their bodies and they were marched out of the Cantonment under an escort of Europeans. Sepoys numbering 500 made their way mostly into Avadh where they sowed the seeds of further unrest. The order of disbandment was read out at every military station. It was little realized by the authorities then that, instead of discrediting the disbanded soldiers in the eyes of their brothers, the disgraced men would be held as heroes for having sacrificed their prospects for the sake of their religion.

In the wake of the court-martial of 85 troopers of a company of cavalry, the sepoys now rose in arms at Meerut, the largest military station in northern India. These sepoys were part of a batch of 90 who, on May 6, had been asked to use the greased cartridges. The idea of the Commanding Officer was to test if the sepoys really objected to the cartridges. With the exception of five, all the sepoys refused to touch the cartridges and proceeded to their quarters. The Commander-in-Chief, to whom a report of the occurrence was sent, ordered the sepoys to be tried by court-martial. The court found them guilty and the sentence was pronounced at a parade which was especially called for the purpose on the morning of May 9. The offending sepoys were brought under the guard of European soldiers, and all the Indian sepoys were ordered to witness the scene. The uniforms of the convicts were then torn off, their arms were snatched and they were all handcuffed. They were then told that a sentence of imprisonment with hard labour for 10 years had been passed. Stripped of their uniform and heavily ironed, they were hurriedly marched to the jail and there placed under a guard of sepoys.

The Indian sepoys who had been made to witness the scene took to heart the insult to which their colleagues had been subjected. Nevertheless, they silently bore their anger

at the parade. During the day, when they went to the bazar, the womenfolk of the town taunted them by saying, "your brothers are in prison and you are lounging about here killing flies ! Fie upon your life !"* This had the effect of enraging the sepoys all the more. They held several meetings during the night. The question was whether they should wait till May 31. Ultimately, it was decided that the uprising should begin on the next day which was a Sunday. Messengers were then immediately despatched to Delhi with the word : "We will be there on the 11th or 12th. Keep everything ready."†

The English officers had no information about the secret meetings of the sepoys when Sunday dawned on May 10. In fact they thought that the troops were in an excellent condition of discipline. They began the day as usual and took little notice of the fact that the domestic servants of some of the officers suddenly absented themselves. The plan which had been agreed upon in the secret meetings was that when the officers were in the church for the Sunday service in the afternoon, the sepoys should rise and finish all the English, civil and military, men and women. Further, it was agreed that thereafter they should march to Delhi.

Towards the afternoon the English were waiting for the tolling of the church bells to get ready to the place of prayer. But in the sepoy lines there was a great commotion and all spoke of the injustice done to the eighty-five troopers who had preferred to leave the regiment rather than lose their honour or their caste. The Indian servants of the officers were whispering amongst themselves about the incidents which would take place in the coming night. Some of them even warned their masters not to go to church-service that evening. In order to calm the sepoys the Commandant of the 11th Indian Infantry, Colonel Finis, rode on horseback to address the sepoys, but there he was immediately riddled with bullets and with him also died one other European officer. In the meanwhile, the 3rd Indian Cavalry proceeded to the jail, summoned a black-smith to cut the iron chains of the prisoners and set free their eighty-five comrades who joined the mutineers of the 11th and the 20th Infantry Regiments.

A state of utter lawlessness now prevailed in the bazar and people crowded together in eagerness for the coming plunder. Everywhere Englishmen began to be killed. The buildings occupied by Europeans and other buildings connected with the administration were set on fire. There was everywhere the cry *maro firangion ko*. The telegraph wires to Delhi were cut and the Railway lines began to be guarded. It was a dark night and there was utter confusion amongst the English. Some of them hid themselves in stables, some passed the night under trees, some on the third floor of their houses and some in ditches. The Commissioner, Mr. Greathed, who was hiding in his bungalow, succeeded in escaping with the help of a personal servant. Amongst the Englishmen killed were Mrs. Chambers, Dr. Christie, Veterinary Surgeon Phillips, Capt. Taylor, Capt. MacDonald and Lt. Henderson. Many women and children died in the burning houses.

At Meerut there were only two regiments of Indian sepoys and one regiment of Indian cavalry. As against these there was a complete battalion and a regiment of Europeans there. The whole of the artillery was also in the hands of Europeans. In these circumstances the rebel sepoys had no chance of success. For this reason the sepoys immediately after revolting proceeded towards Delhi. It was easy for the British officers and soldiers who greatly out-numbered the

*J. C. Wilson quoted by Savarkar.
†Red Pamphlet.

Indian sepoys to control the uprising, but the civil and military officers had lost all their morale and behaved, even according to English writers, with cowardice. Colonel Smith of the Indian cavalry ran away to save his life on learning that his regiment had arisen. The English army remained inactive all night. This was probably due to the fact that the English were completely unprepared for this sudden and unprecedented rising. There was also great confusion because the citizens of Meerut had taken to plundering and burning on all sides and the English could not understand where the real rising was. Anyhow, the European leadership completely failed at Meerut and nobody took the responsibility for a strong and determined action. This was strange because the number of British troops at Meerut was more than sufficient to meet the insurgents and if immediate action had been taken, the mutiny would have been nipped in the bud. The result was a dreadful fate to most of the Europeans of the town.

In the morning the sepoys, terrified by their own deeds, made way to their homes, but the cavalry marched to Delhi to capture the city and proclaim the aged Bahadur Shah as the *de facto* ruler of India. The way in which the sepoys organized their plan of destroying the English at Meerut and then marching to Delhi has been described as a clever and well-organised plan. It has also been recorded that the idea of taking hold of Delhi on the first onslaught was an action of great foresight because the capture of Delhi meant the destruction of British prestige.

In the midst of the horror that was being committed some noble-hearted Indians were giving proof of their benevolence by trying to save the lives of Englishmen at the risk of their own. The Commissioner, Mr. Greathed, and his wife were saved through the generosity of such a one. The Commissioner having received some warnings of the approaching danger had taken his wife and some other ladies to the terrace-roof of his house. The insurgents, after setting fire to the ground floor, surrounded the building. The hiding party was now to perish either by fire or, if an attempt to escape was made, by the sword. But they were saved from certain destruction by one of their employees.* He went to the besiegers and having, with great tact and imagination, gained their sympathy, told them that the Commissioner had escaped from the building. He added that they would find him hiding behind a hay-stack not far distant, if they would care to follow him to the place. Believing him, the besiegers left the burning building and followed their informer. This gave time to Mr. Greathed and his companions to descend into an empty garden, but no sooner had they left the terrace than the upper rooms collapsed with a tremendous crash.†

Several other instances of courage and nobility at Meerut have been recorded by European writers.

Many British authors have written welcoming the mutiny at Meerut. Their view is, and correctly so, that if the uprising had not first taken place at Meerut on May 10, but would have taken the form of simultaneous uprisings all over the country on Sunday, May 31, 1857, as had been planned, the destruction of the British empire in India was a certainty. The English would have been quite unprepared on that day for a countrywide rebellion, and would have thus been annihilated in all parts of the country. The rising at Meerut thus served as a warning to the authorities so that they were able to prepare themselves as best as possible for the onslaught at other stations. Thus,

* This man was the Commissioner's jamadar whose name is given in the report of Commissioner Williams as Gulab Singh, as quoted by Kaye. Dr. Sen, however, has given his name as Gulab Khan.

†Mrs Greathed's *Narrative*.

J. C. Wilson in his *Official Narrative* observes : "From this combined and simultaneous massacre on the 31st May, 1857, we were humanly speaking saved by the frail ones of the bazar. The mine had been prepared and the train had been laid and it was not intended to light the slow match for another three weeks. The spark which fell from the female lips ignited it at once and the night of the 10th May saw the commencement of the tragedy never before witnessed since India passed under British sway". Again, Malleson writes : "It is certain however that if this sudden rising in all parts of India had found the English unprepared, but few of our people would have escaped the swift destruction. It would then have been a hard task for the British nation to reconquer India or else to suffer our eastern empire to pass into an ignominious tradition."

The premature outbreak at Meerut completely disarranged the plan of the leaders for a simultaneous mutiny and thus enabled the British to reconquer one by one several parts of the country which had become independent of British authority.

In memory of the martyrs of 1857, the Uttar Pradesh Government have erected a Victory Pillar at Meerut. This was done on the occasion of the centenary of 1857. With a marble facing, the pillar rises to a height of 125 feet above ground level on a circular platform 6½ feet high. It is 12 feet square at the bottom and 10 feet square at the top which is surmounted by a saucer-like petal. It stands on the Bhainsali grounds in the centre of the city, off Delhi-Mussoorie road. The inscription on the pillar reads :

प्रथम स्वातंत्र्य संग्राम "१८५७"
के उन अमर शहीदों की पावन स्मृति में
जिनका दृढ़ संकल्प स्वतंत्रता प्राप्ति के रूप में मूर्तिमान हुआ।

B. ACTION AT CALCUTTA

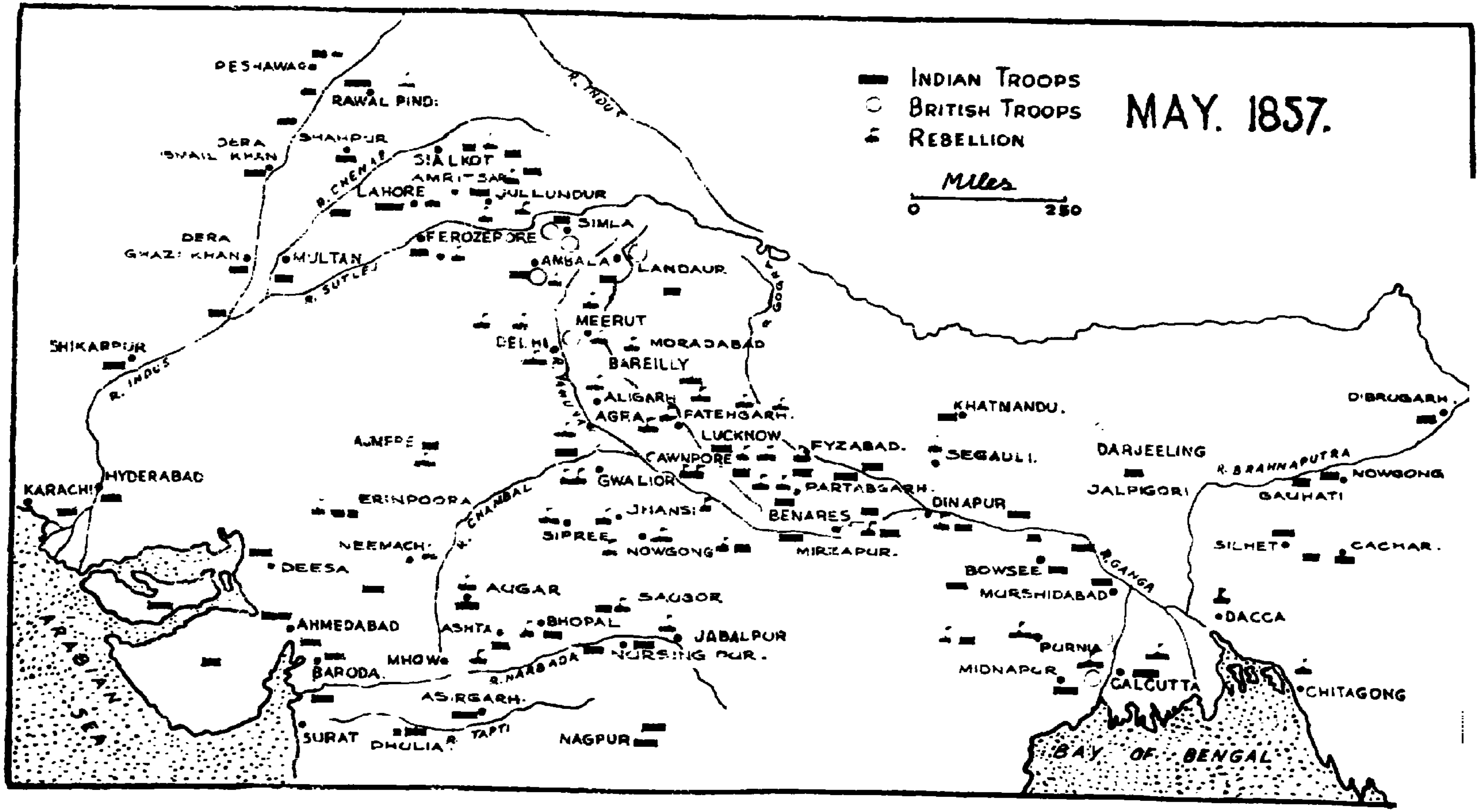
In a telegraphic message, dated May 11, 1857, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces had informed the Governor-General at Calcutta of the rising at Meerut. It ran : "Last night, at nine o'clock, a telegraph message was received here by a lady from her niece, sister of the post-master at Meerut, to the following effect : 'The Cavalry have risen, setting fire to their own houses, besides having killed and wounded all European officers and soldiers they could find near the Lines. If aunt intends starting tomorrow evening, please detain her from doing so, as the van has been prevented from leaving the station'. No later message has been received, and the communication by telegram has been interrupted ; how, not known. Any intelligence which may reach will be sent on immediately."

An official message from Meerut could not, however, be sent, for in the meanwhile the telegraph-wires had been cut by the insurgents.

The authorities were so placid that even after the Meerut rising they had no idea of the seriousness of the trouble which was brewing. The headquarters of the Government of India, with Lord Canning as the Governor-General, were at that time at Calcutta. At so advanced a date as May 25, 1857, the Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote : "There is perfect peace within a radius of 600 miles from Calcutta. Momentary and isolated danger has passed and it is strongly hoped that in a few days perfect peace and safety will reign."

It was not until May 31, that the Governor-General and his advisers became aware of the real danger. By about that time, Kanpur, Jhansi, Allahabad, Varanasi and other places had arisen. Telegraph wires had been cut. The few railway lines that had been laid were already destroyed, and Englishmen killed in considerable numbers.

Lord Canning, the Governor-General, did not lose composure after hearing of what



LOCATION OF TROOPS OF THE BENGAL ARMY IN MAY 1857, AND THE REGIMENTS WHICH MUTINIED

Out of a total of 74 regiments of the Bengal Army, 45 mutinied, 20 were disarmed, 3 were disbanded and 6 remained loyal to the British.

THE FIRST BRITISH VICTIM OF THE "MUTINY"



COLONEL FINNIS
11th Native Infantry, Meerut.
(From the *Illustrated London News* of July 11, 1857)

The Indian soldiers at Meerut mutinied on May 10, 1857, in the afternoon rushing from their lines armed and furious, and firing off their muskets. Colonel Finnis and several other European officers rushed to the parade ground and attempted to pacify the insurgents. At that moment, while addressing them, the Colonel was fired upon. At first his horse was wounded, and immediately afterwards he himself was literally riddled with bullets. The mutineers marched off to Delhi the same night and the next morning an English doctor, while riding to his hospital through the charred buildings all naked and deserted, came across a *dhoolie* which he stopped and asked the bearers what they carried? "The Colonel sahib", they answered; it was the body of poor Colonel Finnis which had just been found where he fell, and was being carried to the burial place.

Colonel Finnis [illegible] was the eldest surviving brother of the Lord Mayor of London to whom the Governor General wrote a personal letter of sympathy.

had happened at Meerut and Delhi. The first step he took was to make arrangements for the collection of as many European troops in India as possible. For this purpose he wrote to the Home authorities in England also. At that time a British expedition under Lord Elgin was proceeding *via* Singapore to attack China. Lord Canning sent an emissary to Lord Elgin to divert the troops to India. Lord Elgin was of course subject to the orders of the Home Government in London and the Governor-General was not sure whether he would heed a request from the Government of India. But Lord Canning wrote explaining the great emergency which had arisen in India and imploring Lord Elgin to divert troops to his aid. Lord Canning added that he was ready to bear the whole responsibility for the consequences of the diversion of the troops. His concluding words were significant : "But I beg your Lordship to believe that, in saying this, I am not influenced by any thought that whatever may be the course for which your Lordship's wise judgment shall decide, you will need any help from me in vindicating it to Her Majesty's Government". In due course, these troops did arrive in India.

Lord Canning also passed a law putting restrictions on newspapers. This was done on June 13 and was necessitated by the fact that, soon after the revolt began, Indian newspapers of Bengal had begun to write articles openly sympathising with and encouraging the revolutionaries.

It is not necessary to detail here the other measures taken by the Governor-General from time to time in suppressing the revolt. These have been dealt with in another chapter.

The English residents of Calcutta also began to organize, early in June, a corps of volunteers. European officers, shopkeepers and clerks who were enrolled in the corps began to learn drill and rifle-handling. In about three weeks a brigade of volunteers was formed. It was complete in itself with cavalry, infantry and artillery. This brigade was thought to be capable of protecting Calcutta and was put on this duty. This enabled the Governor-General to send professional European soldiers to different parts of the country where the 'mutiny' was in full swing.

On June 14, a great panic arose amongst the English population at Calcutta, both officials and non-officials. This has been described in the Red Pamphlet (page 105) as follows : "All was panic, disorder and dismay. The vilest reports were in circulation. It was all too universally credited that the Barrackpur brigade was in full march on Calcutta, that the people in the suburbs had already risen, that the King of Avadh with his followers was plundering Garden Reach. Those highest in office were the first to give the alarm. There were Secretaries to Government running over to Members of Council, loading their pistols, barricading the doors, sleeping on sofas ; Members of Council abandoning their houses with their families and taking refuge on board the ship ; crowds of lesser celebrities, impelled by these examples, having hastily collected their valuables, were rushing to the Fort only too happy to be permitted to slip under the Fort guns. Horses, carriages, palanquins, vehicles of every sort and kind were put into requisition to convey panic-stricken fugitives out of the reach of imaginary cut-throats. In the suburbs, almost every house belonging to the Christian population was abandoned. Half-a-dozen determined fanatics could have burned down three parts of the town".

From the side of Government steps were taken to disarm the Barrackpur brigade. On June 13, the Nawab of Avadh and his Minister, Ali Naqi Khan, were arrested and their houses, including the zenana, were searched. These two persons were incarcerated in the Calcutta Fort. It may be

mentioned that Ali Naqi Khan had a hand in the secret organization which ultimately took the form of revolts at various places in Northern India.

C. PLACES AFFECTED ; PSYCHOLOGY OF PRINCES

After the capture of Delhi by the nationalist forces there was a complete lull for a fortnight. Thereafter, a country-wide conflagration broke out in Northern India. The principal areas of the war extended roughly from western Bihar to the eastern borders of the Punjab. The tide of the revolt was the strongest in the North-Western Provinces, Avadh, Rohilkhand, Delhi and parts of Bundelkhand, Central India and Rajputana. In the North-Western Provinces, Kanpur was the chief theatre of war, Lucknow in Avadh, Bareilly in Rohilkhand, Jhansi in Bundelkhand, Shahabad in Bihar, Gwalior in Central India.

In Bihar the rebellion was mostly confined to Shahabad under the famed Babu Kunwar Singh, one of the foremost leaders of the revolt. According to Commissioner Samuells, "in the districts of Bihar, the great mass of the population believed that our rule was at an end and they must shift for themselves, and they proceeded to loot". The landlords of Bihar stood by the British Government, and helped them with men and money. There were, however, some troubles in Gaya, Champaran, Chhota Nagpur and Deoghar, but they were of much lesser seriousness than the Shahabad rebellion. The chiefs of Orissa too generally sided with the British.

In Bengal the sepoys mutinied at many places, but the local people had no sympathy with them. On the other hand, the rebels were chased and driven away to the forests where they met their end at the hands of the jungle tribes. Two noblemen of Dacca, Kali Narayan Chaudhary and Agha Ghulam Ali, are, however, said to have given financial assistance to the rebellious regiments. The citizens of Calcutta and the landlords of Bengal denounced the mutineers.

In the Bombay Presidency the affected places were Satara, Kolhapur, Nargund and the district of Sawantwadi. On the whole, there was but a feeble demonstration of discontent in this Presidency, and Dr. Sen has expressed surprise that the Peshwa's cause should have found so little support in his own home province.

There were no disturbances in the Presidency of Madras ; only some signs of restlessness were observed in the army. The educated people of the Presidency condemned the rising in northern India.

Of all the places, the chief interest of the rebellion centred round the four cities of Kanpur, Lucknow, Delhi and Jhansi. Separate chapters have been devoted to these places.

A map has been given in this chapter showing the location of the various units of the Bengal Army and indicating the regiments which rose in mutiny. There were 45 such regiments out of a total of 74. Of the remaining 29, 20 were disarmed, three were disbanded and six remained loyal.

Indian Princes

Barring a few chiefs of the Punjab, who unequivocally sided with and helped the British, most of the Rulers of Indian States adopted a double attitude. Inwardly they wanted the British to be dethroned from India, but they had doubts whether the mutineers would succeed in driving away the English. In this state of mind, they did not join the rebels. They feared that, if the English re-established themselves, their States would be confiscated, that they would be finished. At the same time they did not join the British because they did not wish the mutiny to fail.

The undecided attitude of the Princes greatly prejudiced the cause of the rebels. The Rulers of Cutch, Gwalior, Indore and those of the States of Bundelkhand and Rajputana all behaved in this manner. It is to a large extent due to the neutrality of these Indian States that the British were able to recapture their lost territories.

But the general population of the States was enthusiastic towards the uprising and showed extraordinary zeal for the end of the British rule. Whenever the Chiefs of the Indian States hesitated to join the revolution, the people tried to throw off the yoke even of their own Chief. Writes Malleson : "Here too, as at Gwalior, as at Indore, it was plainly shown that, when the fanaticism of the oriental people is thoroughly roused, not even their king, their Raja—their father, as all consider him, their God, as some delight to style him—can bend them against their convictions."* The sepoys of the Rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur refused point blank to raise their hands against their countrymen who were fighting for the nation, even when the Rulers asked them to do so.

D. CHRONOLOGY OF THE REBELLION

The following chronology shows the spread of the revolt at various places in the country :

March 29, 1857 ..	Mutiny of no. 34 (or no. 19) Indian Platoon in Barrackpur (Bengal). Bravery of Mangal Pandey and his arrest.
April 8 „ ..	Execution of Mangal Pandey.
May 6 „ ..	Refusal of Indian soldiers of Meerut to bite greased cartridges.
May 8 „ ..	Sentence on 85 Indian soliders in Meerut.
May 10 „ ..	Mutiny of Indian soliders in Meerut. Capture of Meerut city by the revolutionary soldiers. Advent of country-wide rebellion.
May 11 „ ..	Capture of Delhi by the revolutionists. Administration in the hands of Emperor Bahadur Shah.
May 16 „ ..	Delhi absolutely free from British influence.
May 20 „ ..	Aligarh free.
May 22 „ ..	Mainpuri free. Atrocities on the revolutionary soldiers in Peshawar.
May 23 „ ..	Etawah free.
May 28 „ .	Nasirabad in possession of the revolutionaries.
May 30 „ ..	Beginning of the rebellion in Lucknow.
May 31 „ .. (Sunday)	Day fixed by revolutionaries for country-wide revolution. Rebellion in Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Moradabad, Lucknow and several other places ; capture of the cities and declaration of independence. Fierce battle between revolutionaries and British near Delhi.

*Malleson's *Indian Mutiny*, volume III, p. 172.

June 1	1857 ..	Declaration of independence in Budaun.
June 3	,, ..	Declaration of independence by the revolutionaries in Azamgarh and Sitapur and capture of the cities.
June 4	,, ..	Beginning of revolt in Kanpur. Revolt in Jhansi and Azamgarh also.
June 5	,, ..	Declaration of independence in Kanpur. NANA SAHEB proclaimed as leader. Jaunpur free.
June 6	,, ..	Capture of Allahabad by the revolutionaries.
June 7	,, ..	Siege of entrenchment begins at Kanpur.
June 8	,, ..	Jhansi absolutely free. Fierce battle between the revolutionaries and the British at Badli-ki-Sarai near Delhi. Infantry at Gorakhpur attempts to seize the treasure.
June 9	,, ..	Declaration of independence in Faizabad and Sultanpur. Rebellion of Indian soldiers in Jalandhar.
June 10	,, ..	End of British rule in almost the whole of Avadh from May 30 to June 10. Capture of Ludhiana by the revolutionaries.
June 12	,, ..	The 17th Regiment at Basti plunders treasury of Opium Agent.
June 14	,,	Rebellion in Gwalior. Outbreak at Banda. Entire city of Allahabad in arms against the British.
June 18	,, ..	Atrocities of the British in Allahabad.
June 23	,, ..	Centenary-day of Plassey. Fierce battle in Delhi.
June 27	,, ..	Surrender of entrenchment at Kanpur by General Wheeler. British killed while embarking at Sattichaura Ghat.
June 28	,, ..	Darbar of NANA SAHEB in Kanpur.
June 29	,, ..	Fierce battle near Iron Bridge in Lucknow. Defeat of the British. Beginning of the rule by Begam Hazrat Mahal on behalf of Shahzada Birjis Qadar, son of Wajid Ali Shah.
July 1	,, ..	NANA SAHEB's accession as Peshwa at Bithoor. Revolt at Indore.
July 3	,, ..	Revolt at Patna.
July 6	,, ..	Capture of Agra by the revolutionaries. Declaration of independence.
July 9	,, ..	Defeat of the British army in Delhi.
July 10	,, ..	Defeat of NANA SAHEB near Fatehpur (on Grand Trunk Road between Fatehpur and Kanpur).
July 12	,, ..	Atrocities by the British in Fatehpur.

July 13	1857 ..	Revolt at Kolhapur and its independence.
July 16	" ..	First battle of Kanpur. Bibighar tragedy in Kanpur.
July 17	" ..	Capture of Kanpur by the British.
July 25	" ..	Mutiny of Indian soldiers at Danapur (Bihar). Declaration of independence.
July 27	" ..	Assumption of leadership by Babu Kunwar Singh. Capture of Arrah by the revolutionaries.
July 29	" ..	Defeat of the British Army by the revolutionaries near Arrah.
July 31	" ..	Cruel murder of Indian soldiers at Ajnala (Punjab).
August 5	" ..	Kunwar Singh proclaims himself King of Shahabad (Bihar).
August 14	" ..	Capture of Jagdishpur—the capital of Kunwar Singh—by the British. Kunwar Singh captures Robertsgunj (Mirzapur).
September 14	" ..	Entrance of General Wilson's Army in Delhi after a tough fight.
September 18	" ..	Rebellion in Jabbalpur.
September 20	" ..	Arrest of Bahadur Shah : capture of Delhi by the British. Cruel murder of the Royal Princes.
September 23	" ..	Fierce battle between Havelock's Army and the Revolutionary Army near Alambagh (Lucknow).
September 25	" ..	Havelock's entry into the Residency. He too became one of the besieged.
October 29	" ..	Tatya Tope arrives at Jalaun.
November 9	" ..	Capture of Kalpi by Tatya Tope.
November 13	" ..	Fierce battle near Lucknow from November 13 to November 25. Entry of the British into the city.
November 26	" ..	With the aid of the Gwalior Contingent, Tatya Tope captures Kanpur after three days' tough fight. British force under Windham retires into entrenchment. Kanpur again in possession of revolutionaries.
December 1—6	" ..	Attack on Kanpur by Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief. Capture of the city by the British after six days' tough fight.
March 6,	1858 ..	Attack on Lucknow by the British continuously for nine days. Tough fight. Capture of Lucknow by the British.
March 14	" ..	Entry of British Army in the Royal Palace at Lucknow.
March 15	" ..	Lord Canning's Proclamation confiscating the proprietary rights of Avadh taluqdars with certain exceptions.
March 22	" ..	Capture of Azamgarh by Kunwar Singh. Defeat of Colonel Milman.
March 24	" ..	Commencement of the battle in Jhansi. Fierce battle for eight days. Capture of the fort by the British. Rani Laxmi Bai proceeds towards Kalpi.
March 26	" ..	Kunwar Singh occupies city of Azamgarh.

April 6,	1858	..	Defeat of Lord Mark Kerr also by Kunwar Singh.
April 17	"	..	Revolutionaries ousted out of Azamgarh city by Douglas.
April 22	"	..	Capture of Jagdishpur—his own capital—by Kunwar Singh.
April 23	"	..	Total defeat of Captain Le Grand's army near Jagdishpur.
April 24 or 26	"	..	Death of Babu Kunwar Singh.
May 2	"	..	Capture of Kalpi by the British.
June 1	"	..	Capture of Gwalior by the revolutionaries led by Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope and others.
June 5	"	..	Moulvi Ahmadullah Shah of Faizabad killed while fighting at the gate of the Fort of Powain near Shahjahanpur.
June 17	"	..	Fierce battle between the revolutionaries and the British in Gwalior. Victory for the valour of Rani Laxmi Bai.
June 18	"	..	Noble death of Rani Laxmi Bai on the field of battle. Capture of Gwalior by the British.
September 3	"	..	Revolutionaries attack fort at Bansi.
November 1	"	..	Queen Victoria's Proclamation announcing the taking over of Indian administration by the British Crown.
January 6,	1859	..	Bala Rao enters Nepal.
April 7.	"	..	Man Singh's treachery leads to the arrest of Tatya Tope near Alwar.
April 18	"	..	Execution of Tatya Tope at Sipri (Madhya Pradesh).
February 5,	1860	..	Amar Singh's (brother of Kunwar Singh) death in hospital.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE UPRISING AT KANPUR: NANA SAHEB CHOSEN AS LEADER

A. IMPORTANCE OF KANPUR AS A MILITARY STATION.

B. THE SIGNS OF EXCITEMENT.

C. NANA SAHEB CALLED TO AID BY MAGISTRATE.

D. THE ENTRENCHMENT.

E. THE OUT-BREAK.

F. NANA MADE LEADER BY THE SEPOYS.

अपाय संदर्शन जां विपत्ति,
मुपाय संदर्शन जां च सिद्धिम्;
मेधाविनोमेध विधि प्रयुक्ताम्,
पुरः स्फुरन्तीमिव दर्शयन्ति ।*

—हितोपदेश ।

A. IMPORTANCE OF KANPUR AS A MILITARY STATION.

Prior to their coming into the possession of the English, the district and the town of Kanpur belonged to the King of Avadh. Under a treaty with the Nawab of Avadh, the British maintained a Subsidiary Force for the help of the Nawab Wazir, and this force was stationed at the Cantonment of Kanpur. The Nawab Wazir used to pay an annual sum to the Company for this force. Later, certain territories, including the district and town of Kanpur, belonging to the Nawab, were ceded to the British in 1801-2 in commutation of the annual payment.

Kanpur was an important military station in 1857. Situated on the bank of the Ganga, which was navigable for small boats throughout the year and for heavy craft in the rainy season, the town had also become a centre of commerce. In particular, it had a flourishing leather industry. Within 50 miles of Lucknow and 100 miles of Allahabad, it commanded the highway to Avadh on the one hand, and the Grand Trunk Road, which passed through it, on the other. Realising its strategical importance, the British had garrisoned it strongly.

*Through his intellect, a wise man can see before his very eyes his impending misfortune caused by his own evil deeds: so also can he foresee his good luck resulting from pious actions.

Stationed at Kanpur in May, 1857, were :

(*a*) 1st
(*b*) 53rd — Indian Infantry Regiments.
(*c*) 56th

(*d*) 2nd Light Cavalry (Indian).

(*e*) Artillery, consisting of six guns manned by 61 European artillerymen and a few Indians.

The total number of troops was within 3,000, all Indians with the exception of about 300 Europeans.

The officer in command of the garrison was Major-General Sir Hugh Wheeler, K.C.B., an officer who had put in more than 50 years' meritorious service. He had seen many battles, including those in Afghanistan and the Punjab. Though now well over 70 years, his reputation as a soldier was high. He was very popular amongst the sepoys who were greatly attached to him.

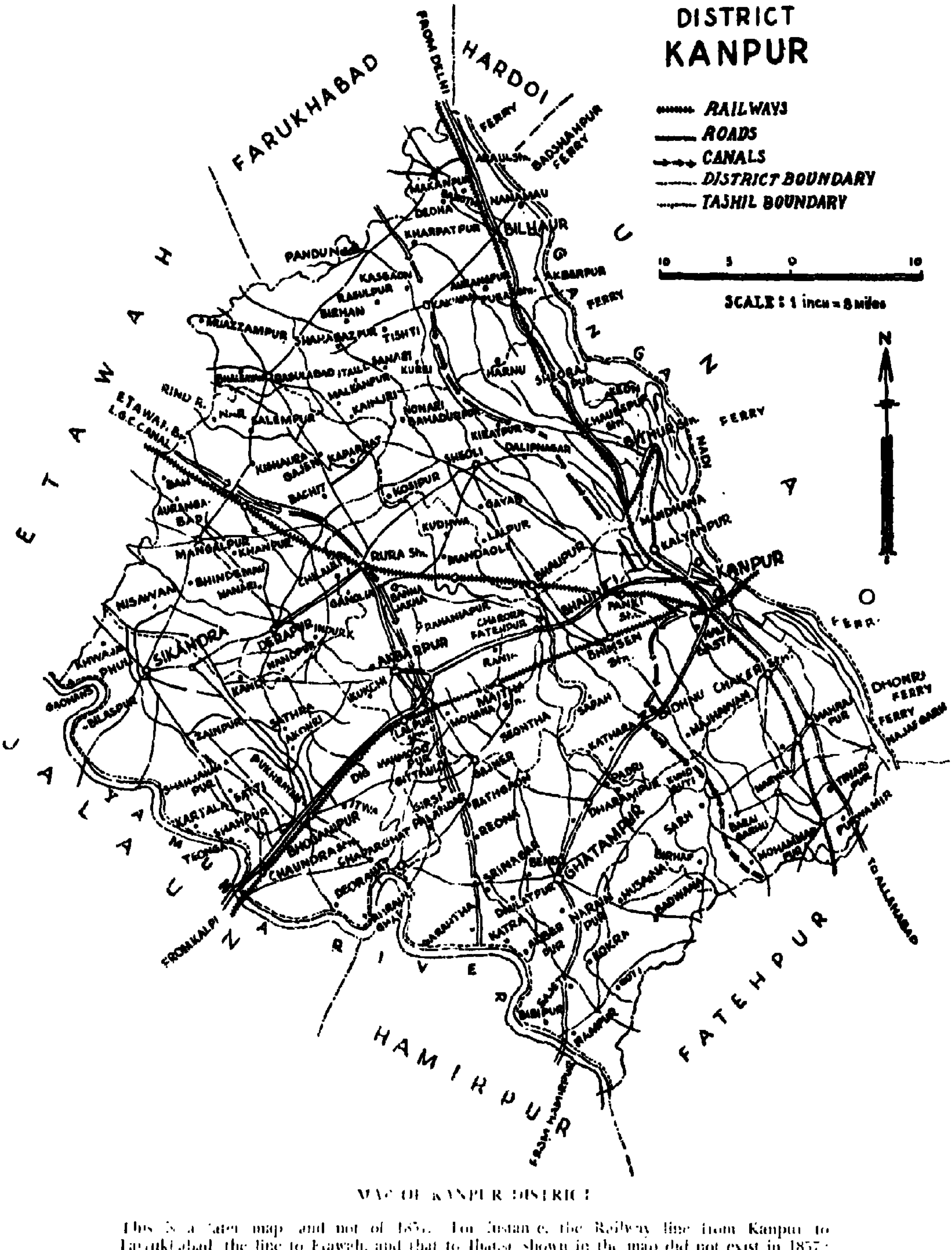
The Collector of the district was Mr. C. G. Hillersdon. The number of civilian Europeans in Kanpur at that time has been put at various figures, and it is not possible to ascertain the exact number. The general estimate puts the number at 750 souls, including those connected with the Civil, Railway, Canal and other Government departments, as well as the women and children of the 32nd Foot Regiment (European) then stationed at Lucknow, these men while proceeding to Lucknow had left back their families at Kanpur temporarily. The Indian population of Kanpur was about one *lakh* persons.* Of these, as many as 40,000 resided in the areas of the Cantonment and Military bazar. It is said that included amongst the latter was a large number of disreputable characters who had come over from the kingdom of Avadh and from far-off places in the country as fugitives from justice. These were, according to official account, held in check to the last by Sir George Parker, reputed to be one of the ablest Cantonment Magistrates.

B. THE SIGNS OF EXCITEMENT

From the very beginning the position at Kanpur was dangerous from the Englishman's point of view because the temper of the Indian troops, particularly of the cavalry, was known to be uncertain. There were also in the town a large number of fugitives from Avadh ; there were also criminals from almost all parts of British India who had collected in the town so as to be able quickly to escape into Avadh territory (until 1856 Avadh had been under Indian rule) beyond the reach of the British Government. With all these elements in, there was little surprise that the city should have been full of rumours and excitement. The position was aggravated by the passage, in April, 1857, of a party of the disbanded 19th Native Infantry from Berhampur which filled the local troops with tales about the new cartridges though these had actually not arrived at Kanpur.

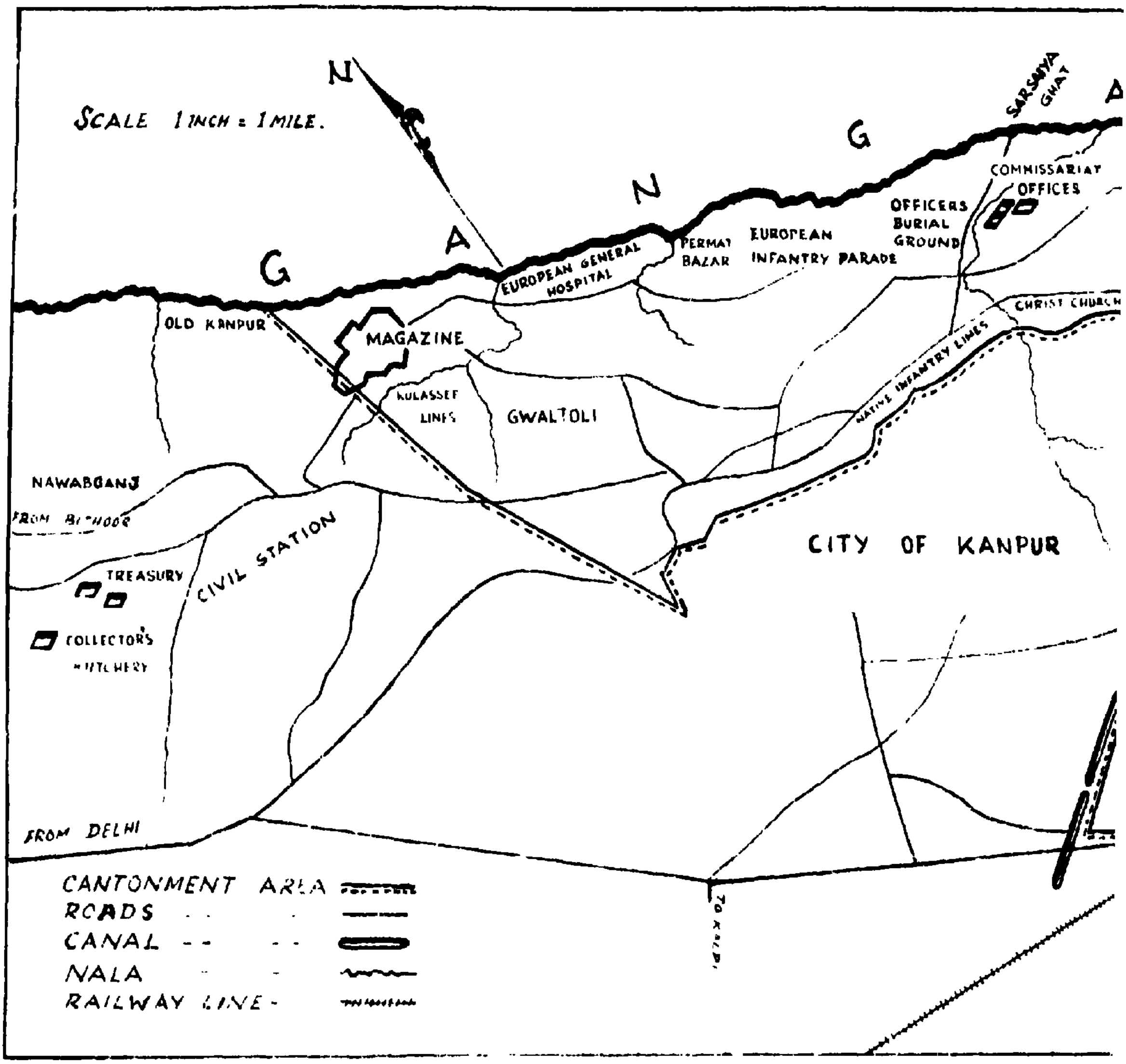
The prevailing excitement was increased when the news of the Meerut and the Delhi happenings reached the people of Kanpur on May 14, although the authorities themselves came to know of it only on the 18th. On May 15, the city was greatly agitated at the news of what had happened at Meerut ; the Kanpur sepoys looked perturbed. Several Europeans of the city had, with the aid of their servants, got clothes of Indian style sewn for themselves so that in an emergency they could escape in the guise of Indians. The more well-to-do amongst them had arranged for boats to carry them to Allahabad.

*The present population is about 9 lakhs. The expansion of Kanpur took place after 1857 and from the same year Bithoor began to decline. A great many people of Bithoor gradually migrated to Kanpur.



MAP OF KANPUR DISTRICT

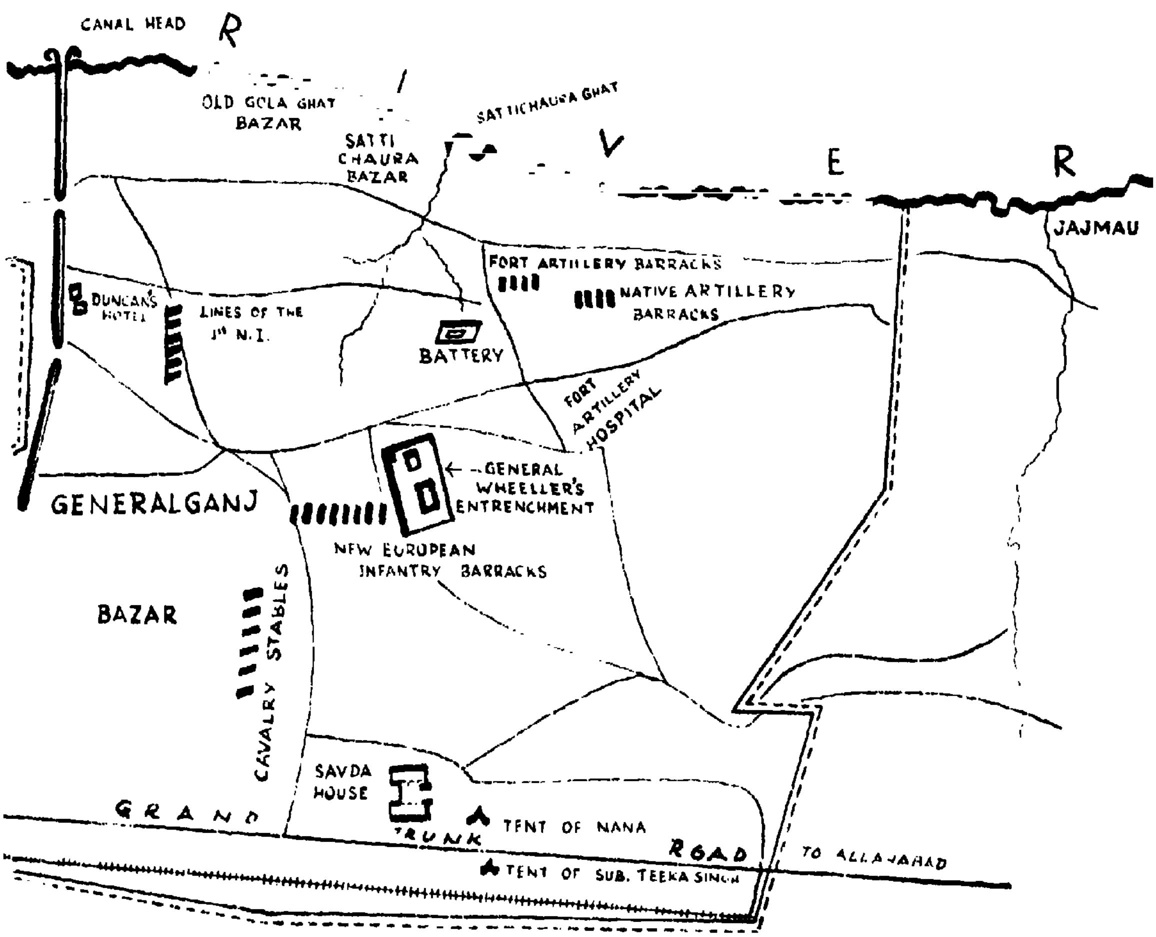
This is a later map and not of 1857. For instance, the Railway line from Kanpur to Farrukhabad, the line to Etawah, and that to Jhansi shown in the map did not exist in 1857; while the line from Allahabad to Kanpur was only in the process of being laid. In other respects, however, the map will be helpful in following the military actions in the various parts of the district.



PLAN OF THE CITY OF KANPUR IN 1857

It will be seen from the boundary of the Cantonment area in this plan (spread on both the pages) that in 1857 Kanpur was almost wholly a military station. Of the total area of Kanpur ([illegible] sq. miles) about 9 sq. miles was occupied by the Cantonment extending on both sides of the Ganga Canal. The city of Kanpur proper comprised only [illegible] sq. miles, while the rest of the area, namely about [illegible] sq. miles was occupied by the civil station and the suburban areas and lands on the north-west and the east sides of the Cantonment boundary.

(Continued on next page)



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The important places which figured in the uprising of 1857 have been marked on this plan with the help of several maps of that time. There is the Wheeler's Entrenchment, the Satichaura Ghat, the Savada House, the Magazine, the Treasury, the Collectorate, old Kanpur and Nawabganj. The Grand Trunk Road from Allahabad to Delhi via Kanpur, the roads to Bithoor and Kalpi can also be seen, together with the Ganga Canal.

Much excitement was also caused by the fact that the bodies of an Englishman and a lady were seen floating down the Ganga one day. These persons apparently belonged to the party of Fatehgarh fugitives who were coming down the river from that town.

General Wheeler, believing in the attachment of his sepoys, was calm. In any case, he did not betray any outward signs of anxiety. On the 18th he had actually sent a message to the Governor-General that all was quiet in his station. But on the 19th he received a telegram from the Government of India asking him to make preparations for accommodating a European force at Kanpur which was expected to arrive there to save the station in case of an emergency. The message also asked General Wheeler to make it known that such a force was arriving. The experienced General did not think that publication of this news was at all desirable, because that would have warned the sepoys that their fidelity was being suspected. But Wheeler expected to hold on to the station and he did not, for a moment, think of evacuating the large European population to a place of safety outside Kanpur. So far the sepoys had shown no signs of disaffection and the General was cautious enough to do nothing in a hasty manner to arouse their suspicion and prompt them to take up arms.

On May 21, a zealous sepoy went about warning his comrades "to keep a look out as mischief was intended by the *saheb logue* and the 1st Company 6th Battalion Artillery guns were made ready, the gunners being on the point of firing upon the Cavalry lines". The offender was tried and sentenced to death, but execution was held over for fear of exciting the sepoys.

On the same day a rumour got currency that the horses, arms and accoutrements of the 2nd Cavalry were to be taken away to be made over to Europeans. The rumour was baseless, but the cavalrymen enquired of their brethren of the infantry whether they could count on their support if an attempt was made to disarm them.

Yet another cause of anger had been the persistent rumour that the flour supplied to the sepoys contained an admixture of the bones of cows and pigs—a method by which the Christian Government meant to destroy the caste of both Hindus and Muslims. It was said that this *atta* had been brought from Roorkee.* Colour to these rumours was provided by the fact that about this time a consignment of rotten *atta* was being offered for sale in the city's market at cheap rates. The stuff smelt offensive on baking and people suspected that grounded bones had been mixed in it. The suspicion was, on investigation, found to be untrue, but it was not easy to satisfy the over-credulous or to stop those taking pleasure in spreading rumours.

However, with all this excitement, events moved slowly. On May 22, General Wheeler telegraphed to Lucknow that it was almost certain that the troops would mutiny that very night. Many ladies of the town consequently took refuge in St. John's Church† which had been selected as a place of retreat in case of alarm. Then on the 26th the General again informed Lucknow that all was well with his station.

Another incident which added to the excitement of the sepoys was the action of a young European officer who, in a state of drunkenness, fired on a party of the 2nd Cavalry doing patrol duty on the night of June 2. He was court-martialled, but was excused on the ground that he was intoxicated when he did the objectionable act. This left the sepoys unconvinced for they knew that drunkenness is no excuse in law unless drink had been administered to an

*Whether it came from Roorkee or elsewhere is not clear, but it had arrived for sale in boats.

†This church was situated near the entrenchment.

offender against his will, which was not so in the present case. The sepoys were confirmed in their suspicion that the authorities meant some mischief. The sepoys made no secret of their perturbed feelings and some even declared that their own firearms might also be discharged by accident some day.

That the Europeans were nervous about their position at Kanpur can be judged from the fact that the birthday of Queen Victoria was not celebrated. Every year in the past, dance, music and dinner were arranged in great pomp to celebrate the birthday and guns used to be fired in salute. This year, no such celebrations took place nor were the guns fired.

C. NANA SAHEB CALLED TO AID BY MAGISTRATE.

On May 26,* the Magistrate, Mr. Hillersdon, felt that the help of Nana Saheb would be valuable in meeting any disturbances that might take place. The Magistrate had for several days previously been in touch with him on this topic and the official version has it that Nana Saheb had, of his own accord, "proffered offers of assistance in case of an outbreak".† He was in a position to give such assistance because he had been allowed by Government, after the death of Maharaja Baji Rao, a retinue of 500 cavalry and infantry men and three guns of small calibre, all under his own absolute control. On the point whether Nana Saheb was himself keen to assist, or whether the Magistrate wanted his help, there is some uncertainty, but this much is clear that on May 26, Mr. Hillersdon did actually ask him to come to his aid. He did come with 200‡ armed retainers and two guns under the charge of Tatya Tope. He was then allotted the task of guarding the treasury which happened to be near his own Kanpur residence at Nawabganj. Along with Nana Saheb's men, a company of the 53rd Native Infantry was also put to protect the treasury.

According to Mowbray Thomson, one of the survivors of Kanpur, the Magistrate invited Nana Saheb to take charge of the treasury. His account runs : "The resident Magistrate, Mr. Hillersdon, being greatly concerned for the safety of the large amount of treasure under his charge, more than a hundred thousand pounds, after consultation with Sir Hugh Wheeler, sent message to Bithoor requesting the presence and the aid of Nana Saheb : he came instantly, attended by his body-guard, and engaged to send a force of two hundred cavalry, four hundred infantry and two guns to protect the revenue. The treasury was at the distance of five miles from the entrenchment, and it was thought inexpedient to bring the revenue into the former position ; consequently it was placed under the custody of the detachment from Bithoor, together with a company of the 53rd Native Infantry, and Nana Saheb himself resided in the civil lines of the Cantonment. The relations we had always sustained with this man had been of so friendly a nature that not a suspicion of his fidelity entered the minds of any of our leaders ; his reinforcements considerably allayed the feverish excitement caused by our critical condition, and it was even proposed that the ladies should be removed to his residence at Bithoor, that they might be in a place of safety."

It is of interest to add that Mrs. Hillersdon had implicit faith in Nana Saheb. On May 16, she wrote a letter to a friend in England

*According to the *Kanpur Gazetteer*, Nana Saheb came to Kanpur on May 22, with 200 men and two guns. On the 26th he was given the charge of the treasury.

†Sherer's Narrative, p. 4.

‡The number of armed men that came has been given as 600 in Mowbray Thomson's version. So the point about numbers is very doubtful.

saying that if the troops mutinied, she and her family would either go into the Cantonment or to Bithoor to the Nana Saheb who was a great friend of her husband and who possessed enormous wealth and influence ; that all would be quite safe there. Two days later she again wrote to say that her husband had made all the necessary arrangements for her and the children to go to Bithoor, that he "will go there himself and, with the aid of the rajah, to whose house we are going, he will collect and head a force of fifteen hundred fighting men, and bring them into Kanpur to take the insurgents by surprise. This is a plan of their own, and is quite secret : for the object of it is to come on to the mutineers unawares."

It was not strange on the part of the Hillersdons and the European officers to have so much confidence in the Nana ; the latter had been on terms of the utmost cordiality with the official circle of the station and few indeed there had been who had not enjoyed his hospitality at Bithoor in one form or the other. It is to his great credit that he did not allow his personal grievance against the British Government to embitter his relations with the gentlemen and the ladies at Kanpur—he rightly kept the two matters separate. Even if he had planned the revolt or had any previous understanding with the sepoys at Kanpur, it is clear that he intended to do no personal harm to the Europeans at Kanpur. This is borne out by the fact that the sepoys, after having mutinied, did not molest their officers or their families, but left them alone—contrary to what happened at most of the other stations.

Dr. Sen has held that there is no doubt that, on hearing of the news about Meerut, Nana Saheb did offer his hospitality and protection to the English ladies by suggesting to Mr. Hillersdon that his wife and the other ladies could be sent to Bithoor. The officer appears to have accepted the offer, but the plan did not materialise because at the last moment perhaps the ladies changed their minds and preferred the shelter of the entrenchment where they hoped to remain on with their menfolk. But about Nana Saheb volunteering to give armed assistance of his own accord, Dr. Sen has preferred to leave the question open. In his *Personal Narrative* Shephard has stated that Nana Saheb undertook to protect the treasury in conjunction with his own sepoy-guard and that his offer was accepted by the authorities. "He accordingly removed to a bungalow near the treasury and with about 500 armed men in his employ, and two small guns, took charge of the place", adds Mr. Shephard.* But as neither Mr. Shephard, who was an Eurasian clerk in the Commissariat office, nor Captain Mowbray Thomson, was dealing with the matter in a critical way, their statements do not carry the value of conclusive evidence, particularly when, as now, doubts have been expressed on the question.

In Col. Williams' enquiry mention has been made of some witnesses testifying that after Nana Saheb had taken over the protection of the treasury, he secretly got into touch with sepoy leaders with a view to inciting them to mutiny. But the evidence was of menial servants and could not be relied upon to prove that Nana Saheb was actually inciting the men. It was perhaps true that Nana Saheb had some meetings with sepoy-leaders, but on this score he was able to satisfy Mr. Hillersdon that the object of the meetings was to concert measures for pacifying the troops who were determined to mutiny. The possibility of Nana Saheb having tampered with the sepoys has been discounted by Sherer who holds that, if anything, he was really in his inner heart a well-wisher of the English. And there was a motive in this, that is to say, according

*Page 15.

to Sherer, it was "a way of getting his pension by putting the English under a great obligation; and certainly he could not at first come to any agreement with the sepoys; or at least he did not". To play two opposite roles requires cunning and artifice in a large measure, and we have it on the evidence of Sherer and others that, whatever may have been the defects in the character of Nana Saheb, he was neither artful nor cunning. If anything, he was a simple sort of person with only a grievance against Lord Dalhousie and even with that grievance he did not entertain inimical feelings towards the English gentry of Kanpur, including civil and military officers. This must be said to his credit at all events.

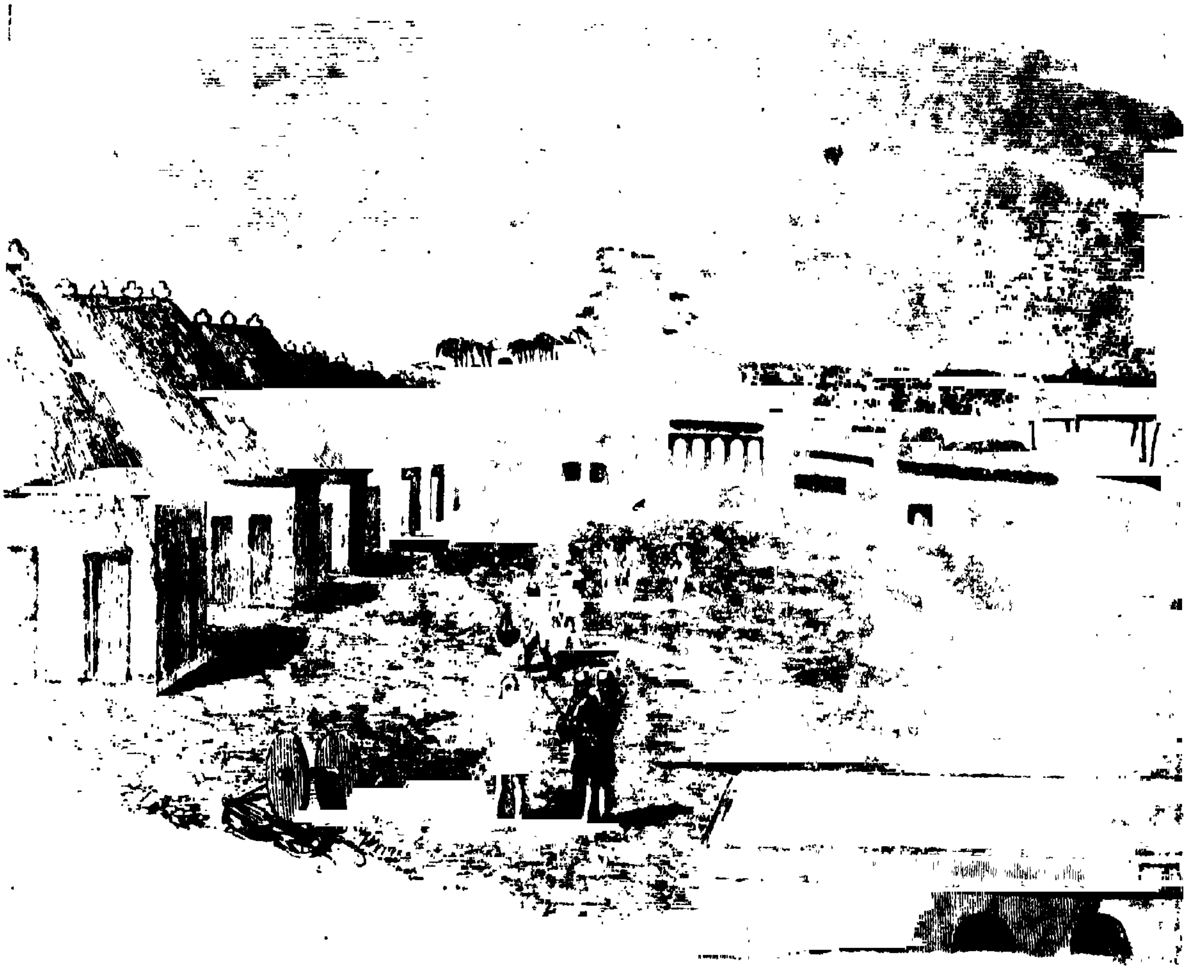
A point that has been put against Nana Saheb is that he is said to have had five lakh pounds in deposit in English banks in 1856; and further it is said that except for a sum of £3,000, he gradually withdrew the deposits by the time of the mutiny. Even if this were a fact, it does not necessarily imply that Nana Saheb was in league with the Kanpur sepoys; he might have made the withdrawals as a prudent precaution thinking that if the British were dislodged from the country his money in the English banks would be lost.

D. THE ENTRENCHMENT

Some of the European officers under General Wheeler were unwilling to entrust their wives and children to the protection of Nana Saheb. Under their pressure, the General began to look out for a place where the European ladies and their children could take shelter. An admirable place for this purpose would have been the Magazine, but the General discarded it, for reasons still unknown, in preference to a block of buildings which formed the old Dragoon hospital. It consisted of two one-storied barracks, one of which had only a thatched roof. A not very deep trench and a mud wall four feet high were thrown round the building. This place was called, and has been known since, as the ENTRENCHMENT. From the view-point of military defence, it was a miserable and practically useless shelter. During one of the days when the mud-wall round it was being raised, Azimullah Khan passed by it with a European lieutenant, who had been a great favourite at Bithoor, and asked the latter, "What do you call that place you are making out in the plain?" On the lieutenant replying that he did not know, Azimullah Khan suggested that it should be called *The Fort of Despair*. The soldier insisted that they shall call it *The Fort of Victory*. Whereupon Azimullah Khan nodded an incredulous assent.

General Wheeler has been greatly blamed for having chosen this place in preference to the Magazine which would have been a much safer place of refuge. But it is easy to be wise after the event. Having regard to the actual circumstances of the moment, General Wheeler must have had some valid reasons for his choice. For instance, it has been suggested that the General was preparing for a temporary shelter only, because he had been assured by his spies that the sepoys, if they did mutiny, would immediately march for Delhi and had no intention of molesting the English community of Kanpur. Sir Hugh Wheeler also did not like to be away from the sepoy lines where it was arranged that the European officers should sleep at night.* It has been further suggested that the General was providing

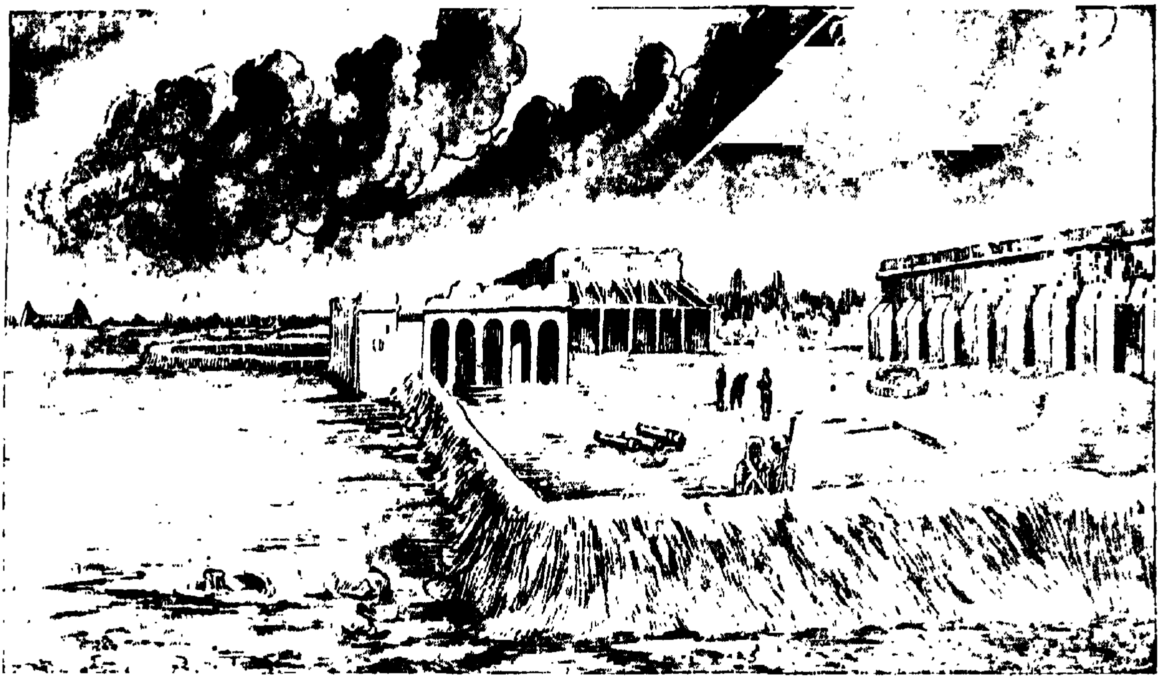
*It is on record that the European officers actually pitched their tents in the lines of their men and with their families remained amongst them during the night. They thus evinced, notwithstanding their alleged want of confidence in the men, a noble example of devotion to duty—Col. Williams' *Synopsis of the Evidence*, p. 3.



INFANTRY PARADE GROUND, KANPUR

(From a picture in the *Illustrated London News* of those days)

This place was the scene of the preliminary incidents at Kanpur. After the Second Cavalry Regiment had risen, a part of the infantry regiments also joined them. Shortly after the rebellious infantrymen had put on their uniforms and loaded their muskets, Colonel Ewart came up to entreat them to be patient. But he was not heard, and the men of the cavalry and the infantry marched off together towards the treasury and the magazine in the area of Nawabganj.



THE ENTRENCHMENT

This ill-fated 'fort' had been designed by General Wheeler as a temporary shelter in the case of an uprising; temporary because the General believed that if the sepoys did mutiny, they would immediately make their way to Delhi. This was what actually happened at first: they had gone one march from Kanpur on the Delhi road and were encamping for a while at Kalyanpur when they were persuaded to return to the city by political leaders. The entrenchment was then besieged, with the result described in chapter 19. The picture shows a part of the entrenchment and its buildings.

IB



SUBEDAR TIKA SINGH

The signal for the start of the mutiny at Kanpur was given by Subedar Tika Singh of the Second Native Cavalry. Thereafter, the whole of his regiment drew up on the road, and this was followed by the rising of the First Native Infantry on being prompted by him. Later Subedar Tika Singh was the moving spirit in the operations against General Wheeler's entrenchment, receiving from Nana Saheb the rank of General.

NANHE NAWAB

Muhammad Ali Khan, popularly known as Nanhe Nawab, was the son of Agha Mir, a former minister of the Awadh Kingdom. On losing his office the minister had settled down at Kanpur. On account of high birth, coupled with his own personal qualities Nanhe Nawab was held in high esteem at Kanpur. He took prominent part in the bombardment of the entrenchment, firing the cannon with his own hands. On the restoration of British power, he was arrested and tried, but was eventually cleared of the murder of Europeans. Thereafter, he made his way to Mecca where he died.





MEMORIAL CROSS AT WHEELER'S ENTRENCHMENT

The Cross bears this inscription: "In a well under this Cross were laid by the hands of their fellows in suffering the bodies of men, women and children who died hard by during the defence of Wheeler's Entrenchment when beleaguered by the Rebel Nana, June 6th to 27th A. D. 1857."

for a retreat in an emergency without causing suspicion to the sepoys and that the way in which the entrenchment was prepared was a token of his confidence in them. But perhaps there were other stronger reasons why General Wheeler in his wisdom did not consider the Magazine a safer place for shelter. The General would have known—and subsequent events proved this—that the mutineers would first of all attack the Magazine, and from that point of view it could not have been a safe place. Secondly, there was the fear of the Magazine being exploded by shots from the mutineers which would have meant the instantaneous destruction of each and everyone of the refugees. Curiously enough, however, no writer appears to have seriously considered these aspects of the question before blaming General Wheeler for rejecting the Magazine as a place for shelter.

The entrenchment was ordered to be stocked with supplies for a month, but it is reported that the contractors had put in lesser amounts than had been ordered. This was on June 4. On the same day, a sum of rupees one lakh was brought in from the treasury which was now still left with nine lakhs in cash. But somehow no steps were taken to secure the ammunition and stores which were lying in large quantities, both in the Ordnance (main Magazine) and the regimental magazines. This shows that no very serious view was taken of the matters in general.*

It is to this entrenchment that the European ladies with their children went in hurriedly at every alarm, only to return from it on the alarm proving false. On the actual outbreak almost the whole European and Anglo-Indian population of Kanpur went into the entrenchment now garrisoned by the English soldiery.

It was on May 22 that European ladies and children were taken to the entrenchment. Fletcher Hayes has graphically described the condition of the inmates. He says that when he went there, he found the baggage of the Europeans coming in buggies, palanquins and carts. Everyone was trembling with fear from imaginary enemies. The women were sitting round an ill-looking dining table in a barrack. All round were women, with infants in their arms, nurses and children and officers. Hayes adds that if in these circumstances mutiny did take place, none but the British were to be held responsible because they proved to the Indians how soon the English people get terrified and how helpless they then become.

Shortly after May 26, the 2nd Regiment of Avadh Cavalry arrived from Lucknow and was put on patrol duty along with a picket of the 2nd Cavalry. Their loyalty, however, began to be suspected and they were accordingly marched out towards Farrukhabad on the Grand Trunk Road with the ostensible purpose of guarding the highway. After a few marches from the city, the regiment mutinied and killed their European officers. Some *Sheikhs* in the regiment, however, returned to Kanpur, bringing with them an artillery officer who was saved as he was with a separate battery detachment much in the rear of the main regiment. These *Sheikhs* were, however, dismissed by the General.

E. THE OUT-BREAK

After a long suspense on both sides, the mutiny did break out on June 4 late at night. The beginning was made by the 2nd Cavalry. Men were in their first sleep when a pistol was fired thrice and a bright fire was lit.† It is said that Tika

*Thornhill's Report.

†This was caused by the burning of a bungalow and a horse litter where there was a large collection of grass.

Singh, who was on picket duty with his troops, had given the signal which was promptly followed by others. The mutineers ran hither and thither, some to set fire to buildings, others to take possession of the regimental treasure-chest. The whole cavalry regiment then drew up in battle dress on the road. Two sawars thereupon proceeded towards the lines of the First Native Infantry and shouted: "Our Subedar-major sends his compliments to the Subedar-major of the First, and wishes to know the reason for this delay, as the cavalry are drawn up on the road." The infantrymen then began to dress themselves and load their muskets. Shortly after, Colonel Ewart arrived and entreated the soldiers in Hindustani, asking them not to take part in "so great a wickedness", but his words went unheeded. The battalion in a body joined the cavalry and both marched off towards the treasury and the magazine in Nawabganj.

But while this was happening, the 53rd and the 56th Indian regiments were quiet and in disciplined order. The Adjutants of these regiments kept the sepoys at drill till long after sunrise on the 5th. The Colonel of 56th regiment actually sent his battalion to the deserted lines of the 2nd Cavalry and collected some of the arms and horses which had been left behind. He then allowed the sepoys to take off their uniforms and cook their breakfast. Similarly, the Major of the 53rd Regiment allowed his men to go to the lines after the drill. The Subedars and Jamadars of these regiments were with the British officers in the entrenchment and it was during this time that a sawar of the 2nd Cavalry incited the sepoys of the 56th who also now rose. The sepoys of the 53rd were still unmoved. They collected in front of the lines, not distant from the entrenchment, with the intention, it is said, of placing themselves under the command of their European officers. It was at this point that an error of judgment is said to have been committed by General Wheeler who ordered the guns of the entrenchment to be opened on the wavering sepoys. These faithful sepoys were at first unwilling to believe that their commander would repay their loyalty in this manner, but it was not until the third round was fired that they fled along the main road to join the mutineers at Nawabganj.

At Nawabganj the mutineers marched in a body to the treasury. The person who had the keys with him was made to give them up. A lakh of rupees were then taken out of the strong rooms and distributed to the men of the four regiments. Thereafter, the insurgents went in different directions—some broke open the jail setting the convicts at liberty; others set fire to the Magistrate's court burning the civil and criminal records in a big bonfire. Some others mounted an elephant and paraded the streets with a flag. Others again cut the cables of the bridge of boats which connected the town with Unnao, and many boats floated down the river. European houses on the west side of the city were burnt and plundered.

After these happenings, the mutineers packed their things and, with a long caravan of carts loaded with their goods and female relations, marched towards Delhi which was the rallying point of rebel sepoys from all military stations. The forecast of General Wheeler was thus vindicated. It was another matter that on second thoughts the sepoys returned back to Kanpur, a contingency on which the General had not calculated.

As the mutineers did not molest the Europeans of the town, several of them sent their servants to place all their property in the boats which had been kept in readiness at the ghats for proceeding to Allahabad. Bazar coolies were not to be found to do the loading and the official account has it that some of the sepoys, who afterwards joined the rebels, helped the personal servants in the loading business. It was the general belief amongst the Europeans that after rising in mutiny, the troops would proceed to Delhi. For this reason, several

Europeans, even after the actual outbreak, remained in their houses, Sir George Parker the Cantonment Magistrate, being one of them.

Though the rising amongst the sepoys was a general one, there were some (Indian commissioned officers particularly) who stood by the British and performed services for them on the day of the outbreak by bringing in arms and ammunition from the regimental magazines to the entrenchment. The official account gratefully mentions the name of Subedar-major Bhawanee Singh. It has been recorded of him that he evinced much noble devotion and fidelity in opposing the mutinous sawars who demanded their colours, and was severely wounded in the result. He was removed to the entrenchment where he subsequently died from further wounds inflicted by a shell. "Thus, though an alien both to our race and creed, he gave his life freely for the Government he had long honourably served"—Col. Williams' *Synopsis of Evidence*, page 3.

F. NANA MADE LEADER BY THE SEPOYS

On their march to Delhi the mutinous sepoys made their first halt at Kalyanpur, a village on the Grand Trunk Road, some eight miles from Kanpur. While the encampment was at Kalyanpur, emissaries of Nana Saheb are said to have gone there and persuaded the sepoys to return to Kanpur, explaining to them that it was better for them to have their own way at Kanpur rather than go to far off Delhi where things might be uncertain. They were also told that when a number of European soldiers was still at Kanpur, it was nothing short of a suicidal act on their part to go to Delhi, leaving things as they were at Kanpur. Whether it was Nana Saheb's own scheme that the sepoys should be brought back to Kanpur, or whether his advisers, particularly Azimullah Khan, were the persons behind the scheme, is a matter on which historians are disagreed. It is also not clearly established whether Nana Saheb himself went to Kalyanpur to prevail upon the sepoys to return back or whether only his agents went there to persuade the sepoys, under financial inducements, to return to Kanpur and to finish the few Englishmen hiding themselves in the entrenchment.

It is also said that Nana Saheb was ready to accompany the sepoys to Delhi, but that Azimullah Khan dissuaded him from that course, saying that while he could play an independent role at Kanpur, at Delhi he would be subordinate to so many other leaders.

Yet another version is that Nana Saheb had no intention of leading the rebels either to Delhi or at Kanpur, but that he was coerced to assume their leadership under threat from the sepoys. This theory of duress finds support from the statement of Tatya Tope made at his court-martial in which he deposed that Nana Saheb was forced to assume the command. A slightly varied version of this account is that a deputation of the Indian officers of the mutinous regiments waited on Nana Saheb and suggested that, if he joined their cause, he would be the master of a kingdom, but that if he sided with the British, he would be put to death.

In a letter written to the British authorities in 1859, Nana Saheb had, on his own part, also asserted that he had been compelled to join the rebels because he and his family were at their mercy and that he had no alternative but to assume their leadership.

There is still another story according to which Nana Saheb had, quite some time before the actual outbreak, been in league with the sepoy-leaders and was inciting them to mutiny. It is said that there were several secret conferences between the sepoy-officers and Nana Saheb. This possibility has, however, been discounted by official writers.

For instance, Colonel Williams, who had conducted a thorough inquiry into the Kanpur mutiny, was unable to accept the version of any previous understanding between Nana Saheb and the sepoy-leaders ; he stated that he could find no evidence in support of this. Again, Thornhill, the Commissioner of the Allahabad Division, in writing his report on the mutiny at Kanpur, also came to the conclusion that there was no previous understanding. His argument was that "had there been any previous understanding between the Nana and the troops, there would have been no object in the march which the sepoys made towards Delhi".

Sir George Forrest could not, however, accept the possibility of Nana Saheb having been forced on threat of violence to join the rebel cause. His argument is that Nana Saheb had two guns and a body of armed retainers with which he could stand any possible attack by the mutinous sepoys. But this argument is hardly conclusive because the guns were those which the British Government had presented to Baji Rao to fire salvoes on festive occasions and were almost useless as weapons of fighting or of defence. As for Nana Saheb's retainers, their number was only 300 and they were no match to the three infantry and one cavalry regiments which had mutinied. There was also the possibility that Nana Saheb's retainers had sympathies with the sepoys and would not have saved him from the latter's onslaught had they indulged in it.

However, whatever may be the circumstances of the case, the fact is not in doubt that the same evening the rebel sepoys returned from Kalyanpur and that Nana Saheb was their head at Kanpur thereafter. The three thousand sepoys at Kalyanpur are then said to have elected Nana Saheb as their King and expressed an ardent desire to see him. It is said that Nana Saheb, with his brothers Baba Bhatt and Bala Saheb, his nephew Rao Saheb, and Tatya Tope and Azimullah Khan, was in the vicinity of Kalyanpur. When Nana Saheb appeared before the sepoys he was hailed with tremendous enthusiasm. Thereafter the sepoys, with his consent, proceeded to elect their officers. Of these, Subedar Tika Singh, the main figure amongst the sepoys, was elected the chief commander of the cavalry and was given the title of General. Certain persons* were appointed as Colonels. New regulations for the army were also issued. Soon afterwards, a grand procession was organised with an elephant at the front carrying the flag of freedom. On the same day it was proclaimed by the beat of drums that Nana Saheb had commenced to rule.

*Subedar Dalbhanjan Singh of the 53rd Infantry was placed in charge of the same regiment, with the rank of Colonel, while the 56th was put in charge of Subedar Ganga Din, also with the rank of Colonel.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE SIEGE OF ENTRENCHMENT : GENERAL WHEELER'S CAPITULATION

A. THE SIEGE.

B. THE CAPITULATION.

A. THE SIEGE

About one thousand persons had taken shelter in the entrenchment—the fort of despair. The number of men was 465 of varying ages and professions. The number of females, married and unmarried, was about 280 and the number of children was also nearly as many. All the men-folk who were able-bodied and could bear arms, about 400 in number, were called together and grouped in batches under military officers.*

The enclosure of the entrenchment was about 200 feet square. It was on an open plain at the end of the city and within range of the infantry lines on two sides. The Magazine was near Nawabganj.

On return from Kalyanpur, the rebel army laid siege to the entrenchment. It is significant that before the laying of the siege, Nana Saheb sent a note to General Wheeler notifying his intention to assault the entrenchment. It ran thus : "We are going to begin the attack. We want to warn you and, therefore, send you this previous notice." This letter reached the General either on the evening of June 6 or the morning of the 7th.

The receipt of this letter greatly perplexed the old General. On the mutineers having marched off on the Delhi road he had felt an inner satisfaction and was now hoping to make way by boats to Allahabad. All were stunned by the news. Soon after, messages were sent for everyone to collect within the entrenchment. The women and children were already there and so were the soldiers on duty. But several Indian officers who had not joined the mutineers, had gone to their bungalows, and these now hastened to take shelter in the entrenchment.

The siege of the entrenchment and its cannonading commenced at about 10 a.m.† in the morning of June 7. There were four guns—two of Nana Saheb and two heavy guns which had been procured from the Magazine. These were later augmented by ten more brought from the Magazine. Subedar Tika Singh of 2nd Cavalry, who had been the most active promoter of the revolt and who now received the rank of General from Nana Saheb, was in command of the operations. As the day advanced, the guns of the besiegers poured incessant fire into the entrenchment which brought forth loud screams of women and children. During the following days the inmates had become accustomed to their fate and the shrill lamentings gave place to "an

*Trevelyan, p. 86.

†This is according to Sherer's Account. Another version is that the siege commenced in the afternoon.

unnatural stillness, more pathetic than the wailings of grief and the clamorous outbursts of terror.*

Thereafter for 21 days, the entrenchment was subjected to cannonading day after day. The protection offered by the walls around the entrenchment and the guns mounted within the enclosure would have been but a feeble defence against a general onslaught, had one been attempted. That the area was heavily mined was the general belief of the leaders of the revolt and this was perhaps the reason why such an assault was never attempted. But there was great enthusiasm amongst the general public to join in the firing on the entrenchment. Women helped men and old men helped young men in the work.

The green flag of the Emperor of Delhi was hoisted in the city. On June 7 a proclamation was issued in Hindi and Urdu from Nana Saheb and distributed in the city and amongst the sepoys. In it Hindus and Muslims were asked to save the religion by their united efforts. On the same day several Englishmen who could not or did not go into the entrenchment were sought out and killed.

Two companies of the 48th Native Infantry and one squadron of the 7th Cavalry were encamped at Chaubepur some miles from Kanpur. On June 9 these troops mutinied and murdered their officers with the exception of Lt. Boulton who found his way into the entrenchment the next day.

On June 10 three boat-loads of refugees, numbering 60—70 persons, came down the Ganga from Fatehgarh. They ran aground near Nawabganj and the whole party was captured. Later, they were put to the sword.

The thatched roof of one of the barracks was set on fire on June 13. This caused the loss of all the hospital stores and at the same time deprived many of the inmates of shelter from the blazing sun.

On June 16 the besieging force was encouraged by the arrival of the 4th and 5th Avadh Irregular Infantry which erected a new battery which commanded the single well from which the garrison obtained their water.

Even while fighting was going on, Nana Saheb made arrangements for the carrying on of the civil administration. By the sudden disappearance of British rule, the administration was in confusion, but Nana Saheb made all possible arrangements at this critical time. Prominent citizens of Kanpur were called together and at their desire he appointed Hulas Singh as City Kotwal and Chief Magistrate. He was given strict orders to protect the citizens from disorderly sepoys or bandit villagers. Another person, by name Mulla, was appointed at the head of the arrangements for supplying provisions to the army.

A court was appointed to settle civil and criminal cases. Jwala Prasad, Azimullah Khan, Ram Lal, the Deputy Collector, and others were appointed judges and Baba Bhatt was made President. Persons found guilty of oppression or disorder were severely punished by this court. Much care was given to the maintenance of public order.

Gradually, the functions of the court increased and it also arranged for the supply of ammunitions and clothes to the army. It tried the arrested English scouts and Indian spies doing work for the English.

Due to his old age, General Wheeler left the active duty of defence to his younger officers, the chief of whom was Capt. Moore. Though arms and ammunition within the entrenchment were more than sufficient, there was scarcity of foodstuffs. To this

*Kaye, volume II, page 316.

difficulty was added the constant firing from the Indian army outside, causing havoc amongst the besieged, fifty per cent. of whom were women and children. The male civilians who could fire were, along with the soldiers, provided with muskets and allotted their task in the defence arrangements.

The condition of the garrison went from bad to worse every day. They were being sustained by the hope of receiving reinforcements from Lucknow, but no rescue party arrived. General Wheeler managed to send some notes to Lucknow through Indian spies. One of these, bearing date June 14, was addressed to Mr. Gubbins and ran as follows : "My dear Gubbins—We have been besieged since the 6th by the Nana Saheb, joined by the whole of the native troops who broke out on the morning of the 4th. The enemy have two 24-pounders. The whole Christian population is with us in a temporary entrenchment and our defence has been noble and wonderful, our loss heavy and cruel. We want aid, aid, aid ! Regards to Lawrence—Yours, etc., H. W." A postscript to this note was added to say that the General needed a barely 200 men to finish the rebels and then give aid to Lucknow.

What precise reply the General received from Lucknow was never known but certain it is that he received no succour, though he received some encouraging reply. On the 18th June, General Wheeler again had caused a note to be sent to Lucknow, over the signature of Capt. Moore. It ran : "Sir,—By the desire of Sir Hugh Wheeler, I have the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 16th. Sir Hugh regrets that you cannot send him the 200 men as he believes with their assistance he could drive the insurgents from Kanpur and capture their guns. Our troops, officers, volunteers have acted most nobly and on several occasions a handful of men have driven hundreds before them. Our loss has chiefly been from the sun and their heavy guns. Our rations shall last a fortnight and we are still well supplied with ammunition. Our guns are serviceable. Report says that troops are advancing from Allahabad and any assistance might save our garrison. We of course are prepared to hold out to the last. It is needless to mention the names of those who have been killed or died. We trust in God and if our exertions here assist or save, it will be consolation to know that our friends appreciated our devotion. Any news of relief will cheer us. Yours, etc.—J. Moore, Captain, 32nd Regiment."

The miseries of the besieged were greatly added to for want of water. There was a single well within the entrenchment and its water supply was quite inadequate for a thousand people during the hot month of June. To make matters worse, the well was a target of artillery-men outside with the result that if a man appeared with a pitcher during the day, a volley of grape was fired on him. Darkness also offered but little safety, because the sound of the creaking tackle reached the besiegers who then opened fire. Soon the beam and brick-work over the well, which was giving some protection to the drawers, was shot away and so buckets had to be hauled up, hand over hand, from a depth of sixty feet. It was not long before the Indian water-carriers within the entrenchment had been killed and their place was taken by English soldiers who received a wage of half a sovereign for every bucket of water. The grown-ups, knowing what a dear price was being paid for water in life and money, bore their thirst in silence. The same could not be expected of babies and children who kept up a perpetual moan which was most terrible to their parents to hear. Children were seen "sucking the pieces of old water bags, putting scraps of canvas and leather strips into the mouth to try to get a single drop of moisture upon their lips."*

*Trevelyan, p. 136.

Death amongst the besieged was taking its toll at a rapid rate. Within three weeks, 250 souls, *one-fourth* of the whole garrison, had breathed their last. It was a problem to bury the dead. However, a place was found, a sort of a well beneath the walls of an unfinished construction, lying at a distance of 200 yards from the rampart. During the night, the dead bodies were taken there to be given an improvised burial—this was not possible during the day when battle raged around that place. Even the hour of the night was varied lest the besiegers came to know of the melancholy proceedings. Amongst the earlier casualties were Mr. Hillersdon, who was killed by a round shot, and Mrs. Hillersdon who a few days afterwards was crushed to death by falling masonry.

General Wheeler's son, a captain in the army, was also wounded. His two sisters and mother were just going to give him medicine. Before this could be done, there was an explosion and his head was carried off by a cannon ball. Magistrate Hillersdon had also lost his life while talking to his wife in the verandah. He was blown to pieces by the bursting of a cannon ball on his head. A few days later his wife died by the falling of the wall at which she was leaning. In one of these days seven women, who were near a ditch in the entrenchment, were also killed together by a bomb explosion. Cholera, dysentery and typhoid too were active taking a heavy toll. Those who survived went almost insane from terrific fright and ghastly scenes.

The situation of the besieged has been described by Sherer thus: "Having at his command a Magazine, stored with every description of ammunition and ordnance, a treasury full and the city bazar in his hands, it is not to be wondered at, that he (Nana Saheb) soon rendered the situation of the Europeans next to hopeless. An incessant fire of musketry was poured into the entrenchment from the nearest buildings; guns of large calibre, drawing gradually closer and closer, sent their shot and shell, without intermission, against the brick-walls of the barracks; and carcases fired the thatched buildings, in which numbers of sick and helpless women and wounded men were huddled together, many of whom were burnt alive."

He goes on to say: "The hospital stores were lost or destroyed and all being now crowded into one building, without medicine, the sick and wounded died without relief. With the greater portion of their ammunition spent, the besieged were also forced to slacken their fire. In short, their position was rendered hopeless and helpless in the extreme; and all this before the firing had lasted for half a week."

Sherer then concludes his account of the miseries of the besieged: "The half-destroyed walls of the barracks, or the temporary expedient of piling up tents and casks, formed the precarious but only shelter that could be obtained. Food could only be carried from post to post by day, and the dead were removed by night, and thrown into the adjacent well without the decency of burial. Relief was expected on the 14th June; but day after day brought no succour. Round shot and disease were doing their work, provisions ran short, and the misery endured by all can hardly be imagined."*

With little hope of receiving assistance in time from Lucknow or Allahabad, General Wheeler sent out some spies in order to induce Nanhe Nawab to cause a rupture amongst the rebels so that they could give up the siege. The Nawab was promised a big reward, including a large pension. The name of the Nawab was particularised because General Wheeler had known that this

*Sherer's *Account*, page 6.

nobleman had suffered humiliation at the hands of the sepoys soon after the outbreak and that his house had been sacked. Although terms were made with him by Nana Saheb later, the General thought it possible that he could be deflected from the rebel cause on promise of tempting rewards. But his spies were unsuccessful in their mission. They could not also induce the influential people of the town, particularly the rich business community, in giving assistance to the besieged although heavy rewards were promised.

Of all the days, the battle was most fierce on June 23, which was the centenary of Plassey. The cavalrymen were particularly impetuous on this day and fought valiantly galloping furiously forward within reach of the guns of the entrenchment. The infantrymen on their part advanced under cover of huge bales of cotton which had been brought on the site, but these proved to be of little use because they easily caught fire from the guns of the Europeans. Many of the sawars and sepoys were killed in a bold endeavour to reduce the entrenchment which they failed to capture.

B. THE CAPITULATION

By June 24, the besieged had almost reached the limit of endurance. General Wheeler wrote thus to Lucknow, which was to be his final message : "British spirit alone remains. . . . It cannot last for ever . . . . Surely we are not to die like rats in a cage." The rations were getting exhausted and people were having only half meals for the last four days. Ammunition was also getting exhausted.

It was at this juncture that a truce was negotiated. Whether the initiative came from the besieged or the besiegers has been the subject of controversy. Indian writers hold that on the 24th or 25th June, the General raised the white flag whereupon Nana Saheb at once ordered the firing to stop. Negotiations for surrender then started. English writers, on the other hand, adhere to the version that it was Nana Saheb who initiated the negotiations by sending a messenger in the person of a Mrs. Jacobi* who, along with the Greenway family, was confined in one of the rooms of the Savada house where Nana Saheb had taken up his residence.

It is said that the lady carried to General Wheeler a note in the handwriting of Azimullah Khan, but bearing no signature. It read : "To the subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. All those who are not in any way connected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie and are willing to lay down their arms shall receive a safe passage to Allahabad." After prolonged deliberations with his officers, General Wheeler decided to accept the offer. He had no alternative because the provisions had completely dwindled down and the defence could not stand any longer. The fear of rains soon setting in was also there ; the walls of the entrenchement, which had been shaken and riddled, would crumble down, and in one barrack, which was now without a thatch, the whole Company would be flooded and the gun powder also rendered useless. There was thus apparently no choice between death and capitulation. However, in order not to show an appearance of eagerness to accept the offer, Mrs. Jacobi was sent back with the word that an answer would follow. The besieged had been there for 21 days on 25th June.

*Some say that the lady was Mrs. Greenway. Mr. Greenway was a prosperous businessman of Kanpur and at the outbreak he and his family had been taken into custody by Nana Saheb's men in the hope, it is said, of receiving a ransom of some four lakhs of rupees. Thus, while the rest of the Europeans were besieged in the entrenchment, the Greenway family and Mrs. Jacobi, who had been captured by the rebels while trying to escape to Lucknow disguised in Indian clothes, were living in the Savada house.

The next day, June 26, Azimullah Khan and Brigadier Jwala Prasad were invited by Capt. Moore and Capt. Whiting, the officers to whom the General had delegated full powers, to a discussion which took place at some spot near the outpost. These officers undertook "to deliver up the fortification, the treasure and the artillery on the condition that our forces should be marched out under arms with 60 rounds of ammunition to every man; that carriage should be provided for the conveyance of the wounded women and children and that boats victualled with sufficiency of flour should be in readiness at the landing place."*

These conditions were acceptable to Azimullah Khan. The terms were thereupon reduced to writing and Azimullah Khan came back with the paper promising that he would persuade his master to accede to these proposals.

In the afternoon, the same day, a sawar came to Capt. Moore to tell him that Nana Saheb had accepted the terms and desired that the barrack should be vacated that very night. Indian writers have suggested that Nana Saheb wanted this done lest the news of the departing English might become known to all and thus endanger their safety. This was a real danger because there were in the town large numbers of enraged sepoys who had come from Allahabad and Varanasi and who were bitter at the atrocities which had been committed by the English at those places. However, the besieged did not accept the suggestion and sent Mr. Todd, who had been Nana Saheb's English tutor and whom the Nana much respected, to persuade him to agree to departure being delayed till the next morning. Nana Saheb accorded to Mr. Todd "a most gracious reception" and accepted the suggestion. Brigadier Jwala Prasad, with two other persons, came to the entrenchment as hostages for his good faith.

During the night Brigadier Jwala Prasad had expressed sorrow at the condition of the besieged and promised to the General that now he would do all in his power to protect them from harm. His presence incidentally served a purpose not contemplated earlier. It happened that by accident a sentry in an outlying barrack had dropped his musket which exploded leading the besiegers to believe that it was a fire from the entrenchment. A simultaneous discharge was thereupon showered on the entrenchment from the besieging batteries. At once Jwala Prasad sent a message to the commander outside to inform him of the true cause of the accident whereupon the bombardment ceased.

The boats with provisions were got ready before sun-set and two or three English officers accompanied by some cavalrymen were taken on an elephant to the river-side to see the arrangements. They saw 40 country boats, some of which had been provided with roofs already while work on some others was going on. They suggested certain improvements whereupon 400 more workmen were at once engaged to do the needful. Some provisions were also placed on the boats in the presence of the English officers.

The negotiations, and consequential arrangements, having thus been completed, the besieged spent a care-free night after long trials and tribulations. But their ill-luck was still not exhausted and further miseries were awaiting their turn on them. It is on occasions such as these that the design of Providence becomes baffling to man.

*Trevelyan, p. 168.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE SATTICHAURA GHAT

A. THE MELANCHOLY PROCESSION.

B. THE INCIDENTS AT THE GHAT.

C. NANA SAHEB'S ORDER SAVES WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

D. THE BOAT THAT ESCAPED.

ANNEXURE—HISTORY OF SATTICHAURA GHAT.

A. THE MELANCHOLY PROCESSION

The inmates of the entrenchment had little packing to do for little worth removal had remained. But "some hid about their persons, money or jewellery or fragments of plate. Others seemed to think that a Bible or a book of prayers was a treasure more likely to be of service in the coming emergency than turquoises and silver spoons and gold sovereigns. The able-bodied folk, intent on the common safety, stuffed their hats and pockets with ball-cartridges; while a few, over whose hearts, softened by the influence of the occasion, affection and regret held exclusive sway, bestowed all their care upon tokens which the dying had put aside as a legacy for the bereaved in England." Many and strange were the relics and these included "locks of hair and stained sleeves or collars, and notes scribbled on the fly leaf of an orderly-book, . . ."*

In the morning, carriage in the shape of elephants, palkis, dolis and carts arrived to take the people to the boats. Nana Saheb's own elephant with a stately hauda was especially sent to be used by Sir Hugh Wheeler. The General was moved by the consideration thus shown to him, but in order to avoid conspicuousness he preferred to make the journey in a palki after sending his wife and daughters on the elephant. The sick and wounded were carried in litters. Capt. Moore went about the people explaining to them that as soon as they got into the boats they should soon make for the opposite shore where further necessary arrangements could be completed in comparative safety. He was conscious that no discipline could be preserved during the embarkation. The men, women and children then made their way to the Sattichaura Ghat. This place was at a distance of one mile to the north-west of the entrenchment. The bed of the Ganga was dry.

The arrangement for despatching the garrison to Allahabad had been entrusted to Tatya Tope. He had arranged for the boats through Hulas Singh, the City Kotwal. There was at first some difficulty in procuring, at such short notice, the large number of boats that were needed. Eventually, Hulas Singh succeeded in persuading the *chaudhari* of the boatmen of Sattichaura

*Trevelyan.

to arrange for forty country boats of large size. Some of these belonged to the mallahas themselves while some others had been borrowed from the citizens of Kanpur.

Tatya Tope had, as a measure of precaution, also arranged for some troops to be present at the Ghat at the time of embarkation. As a further precaution he himself was present there with Azimullah Khan and some others.

Before the train of palkis left the entrenchment a drink of water was handed to the ladies and the children. The procession was headed by men of the 32nd Regiment. Then followed the palkis carrying the wounded who were bandaged with shirt-sleeves, old stockings or strips of gown or petticoat. Behind them there were elephants which also carried women and children. In the rear were the soldiers who could still walk and fight. They had nothing like uniforms on their bodies—they wore discoloured flannels and tattered nankeen and walked in a pensive mood. There was a great crowd of spectators all along the route, particularly at the Ghat.

With the throng of the evacuees mingled a number of sepoys who talked to the officers under whom they had formerly served. They expressed admiration for the remarkable obstinacy of the defence and many spoke words of sympathy for the distressing condition to which the besieged had been reduced. Some others shed tears in sincere regret on hearing of the sad fate of the missing officers.

A sad incident occurred while the party was proceeding to the Ghat. Colonel and Mrs. Ewart had been somehow delayed in leaving the entrenchment ; perhaps they were the last persons to make their way to the river after the rest of the party had gone a considerable distance. Because of his wounds, the Colonel was being carried on a bed of litter accompanied by his wife. It is said that some disgruntled sepoys of his own regiment approached him and in their fury slew him and Mrs. Ewart. At least one of the sepoys tried to stop the others from killing Mrs. Ewart, but they paid no heed to his entreaties.

It was this Mrs. Ewart who had, just before the mutiny, written in a private letter that "an accidental spark may set the whole of the regiments of infantry and one of cavalry in a blaze of mutiny ; and even if we keep our own position where we are entrenched, with six guns, officers must be sacrificed ; and I do not attempt to conceal from myself that my husband runs greater risk than anyone of the whole force." Col. Ewart himself had similarly written that "if the troops did mutiny, my life must almost certainly be sacrificed". The Colonel had escaped injury at the hands of mutinous sepoys although on the day of the outbreak he was in the midst of them trying to persuade them to be peaceful. He had later sustained serious injuries during the early part of the siege and was carefully nursed by his faithful wife. In this context, the circumstances of his death, followed by the murder of his dutiful wife, were all the more pathetic.

Embarkation into the boats was difficult because they were at some distance from the bank and the evacuees had to get into knee-deep water. There was a scramble for seats and children were particularly attracted to the food which was stocked in one of the barges.

B. INCIDENTS AT THE GHAT

Since the morning of June 27, thousands of citizens of Kanpur began to assemble at the Ghat to witness the scene of the departing English. Azimullah Khan, Bala Saheb and Tatya Tope were sitting on a carpet at the temple of Hardeva to supervise the departure. Numerous sepoys from Allahabad and Varanasi had come during the preceding



SATTICHAURA GHAT, KANPUR

Situated in the Cantonment area on the right bank of the Ganga, a few furlongs below the Railway bridge, it was at this Ghat that arrangements had been made for the embarkation of the Britishers on their projected journey to Allahabad. Forty large country boats had been improvised for the purpose at a few hours' notice, and fitted with straw roofs and provisioned with rations. Tatya Tope was in charge of the arrangements and, along with some others, was seated on the platform in front of the temple of Hardeva Mahadeva which is seen in the picture.

It was when everything was ready and the boats with their passengers were about to make the start that a bugle was suddenly sounded by some one on the bank. Thereupon, a party of the sepoys, who had collected to see the pitiable sight of the English in their misfortune, fired upon the boats and a general massacre ensued for which reason the place began to be called 'Massacre Ghat'.

(At page 284 *infra* has been shown the plan of the arrangements made for the embarkation)



BRIGADIER JWALA PRASAD

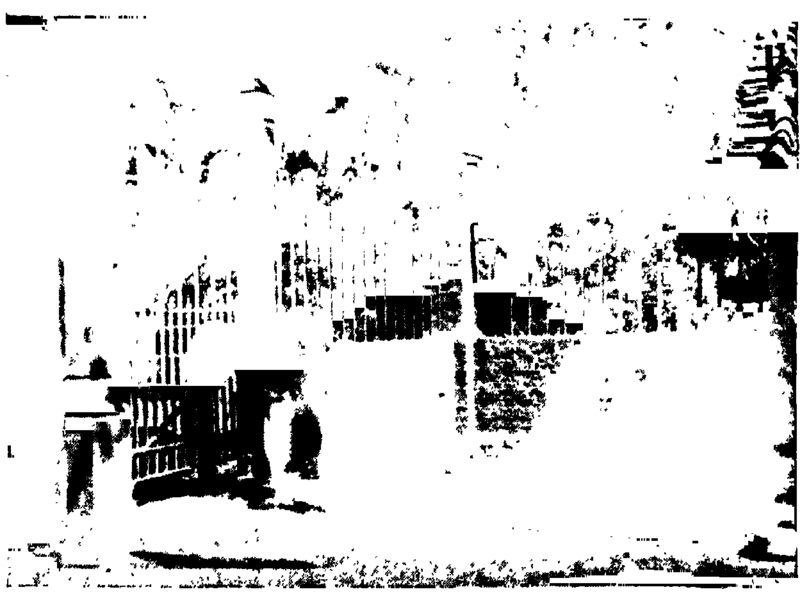
That for participating in the struggle for freedom Brigadier Jwala Prasad should pay with his life was not unusual, but the unusual thing was that the revengeful feelings of the British led them to hang their prisoner at the Sattichaura Ghat which was really no place for this proceeding. It was so chosen only because the departing English were fired upon and killed here by furious sepoys.

Brigadier Jwala Prasad, a person of influence, belonged to a high family, and, before the uprising was on the staff of Nana Saheb. He had fought valiantly in the defence of Kanpur and had eventually escaped to Nepal. There, when reduced to extremities, he, like so many fighters for freedom, surrendered. He was brought to Kanpur, subjected to humiliation, tried and sentenced to death. Mr. Sherer, the Collector of Kanpur, had shown him kindness by loosening his fetters to enable him to eat his meals with ease. The unlucky Jwala Prasad felt deeply grateful for this small mercy and blessed the kind hearted Sherer.



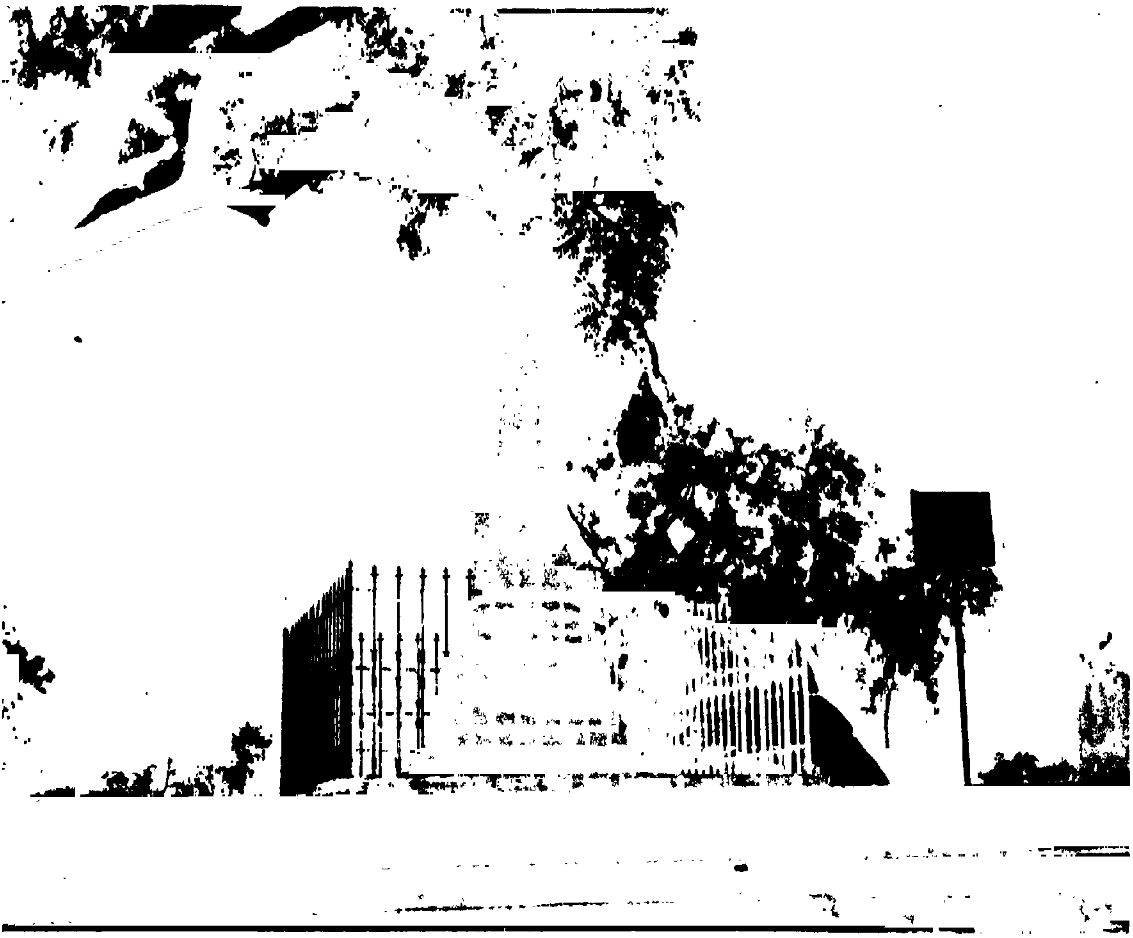
MEMORIAL CROSS AT SATTICHAURA GHAT

The Cross is situated on the platform of the temple of Hardeva Mahadeva and is enclosed by an iron railing. It is only a few feet from the wall of the temple, the side door of which is seen in the background. The following words are inscribed on it : "IN MEMORIAM, 27TH JUNE, 1857." Until recently it was a protected monument under the Central Archaeological Department. The protection has since been withdrawn by a notification of the Government of India.



GATE OF SATTICHAURA GHAT

Until 1926 the Sattichaura Ghat and its environs remained neglected and only inquisitive visitors went there to see the Ghat and the Memorial Cross on the platform of the temple. In 1926 the site was laid out and a gate as seen in this picture, was put up and the area was enclosed. At the right of the picture is also seen a marble tablet with the inscription : "*SATTICHAURA GHAT, MASSACRE GHAT, 1857. This site was improved and enclosed in 1926 at the instance of the late Captain L. B. Hughes-Rowlands, then Executive Officer, Cawnpore Cantonment. This tablet was erected by Mr. W. G. de Noronha on the 15th November 1930*". Since then, with the restoration of the temple premises and the construction of an adjoining *ashram*, the place is now a popular resort for devout people.



SITE OF SAVADA KOTHI, KANPUR

The survivors of the Sattichaura Ghat were first taken to the Savada House (or Kothi) where they were kept for a few days. Thereafter they were transferred to Bibighar.

The Savada Kothi exists no longer—it was pulled down on the British reoccupation of Kanpur and its site was marked by an obelisk which is seen in this picture. It carries the brief inscription: "IN MEMORIAM, SAVADA KOTHI, 1857."

The Kothi was situated in the Cantonment area near the place which is now occupied by the training aerodrome of the Indian Air Force. The ruins of the Kothi are underneath the earthen mound on the top of which stands the obelisk surrounded by an iron railing. The obelisk is a 'protected monument' under the Central Archaeological Department whose usual notice can be seen on the sign post on the right side of the picture.

week as also on the day on which the English were leaving. These men were filled with feelings of bitterness against the English on account of the cruel revenge which British officers and soldiers had taken on their comrades and their wives and children. Hundreds of young men whose fathers had been hanged in the shape of the figures 8 and 9 had also come there. There were also the persons whose wives and infant children had been burnt by General Neill. Fathers whose daughters had their hair and clothes set fire to were also crowding the place. These men, smouldering in great anguish, were thirsting for revenge on the English. The sepoys of Kanpur learnt of these cruelties from the men of Allahabad and Varanasi.

It was in this state of affairs that the people and the sepoys began to grumble that Nana Saheb should have arranged for the safe passage of the Europeans to Allahabad. Many were filled with rage and were determined to take revenge.

There was a dead silence while the embarkation was going on. The passengers waded through the water and took their seats in the boats. There was no disturbance—not a sound was heard. The boats were all crowded.

Nana Saheb had sent a letter to Sir Hugh Wheeler at the Ghat expressing satisfaction at the relief obtained by the General and his soldiers and wishing him *bon voyage*. General Wheeler sent a reply full of gratitude. As soon as Nana Saheb's messenger went away taking this letter, Tatya Tope waved his right hand as a signal for the boats to start. The boatmen took to their oars and a start began to be made.

Nearly at the same instant, somebody out of the great crowd of sepoys and spectators sounded a bugle. Thereupon, some confusion appears to have been caused in the boats and the terrified boatmen began to jump into the water and run towards the shore. A soldier in the boat which carried Mowbray Thomson and others fired at the fleeing boatmen. This caused further panic all around. The sepoys, who were filled with fresh memories of the atrocities committed upon Indians by the British at Varanasi, Allahabad and Fatehpur, could not restrain themselves ; the boats began to be fired upon. The English soldiers also fired towards the bank. The thatched roofs of the boats caught fire in the process.

When the boats caught fire, many women jumped into the water with their infants in arms. Some were drowned ; some small children were also drowned. Of the men, some began to swim, some were drowned and several were killed by bullets coming from the bank. Of the women and children who escaped being drowned, some died from these bullets. Those of the evacuees who had come wounded from the entrenchment were left to their fate on the boats and many were burnt to death. In the meanwhile, a number of sawars rushed into the water with their swords and finished many of the survivors.

Tatya Tope, it is recorded, asked the people not to kill the Europeans as it was a great sin to kill persons who were at their mercy. But nobody listened to him. The sepoys were greatly agitated due to the atrocities of the English at Varanasi and Allahabad.

C. NANA SAHEB'S ORDER SAVES WOMEN AND CHILDREN

In the meanwhile, a trooper ran to Nana Saheb in the Savada house to tell him what was happening. Nana Saheb immediately sent him back with an order that women and children were in no case to be slain.

On the arrival of the sawar with the Nana's order, the proceedings were at once stopped. The survivors were taken out of water and brought to the bank. Their number was about 125. These consisted mostly of women

and children. After providing them with some refreshments the survivors were taken to the Savada Kothi to be put up there.

The Englishmen who had survived were made to stand in a line. The order that they were to be executed was then read to them. One of the party asked to be given time to read to his comrades some sentences from a prayer-book. His request was granted. After the prayer was finished, the prisoners were put to the sword. This is significant when compared with the treatment given by Europeans to captured Indians. It is on record that before being put to death, Indian captives were sometimes forced to do dirty things which deprived them of their caste or religion ; this was deliberately done with that intention. In that light the actions of Indians must be considered moderate in comparison with those of Neill and Renaud and other Europeans. In burning villages the Europeans did not care for the lives of women and children ; indeed they took pleasure in their dark misdeeds.

While on this subject of Nana Saheb's order for saving women and children, a reference may be made to certain observations of Sir John Kaye. This author has written his book with a balance although at places he has carried his rhetoric to disproportionate lengths. He has tried to be fair to Indians, but on this particular occasion he, like most of the English writers, has not done justice to Nana Saheb. One and all have represented him as lacking in all humanity and good sense. The above-mentioned order of Nana Saheb has unjustly been misinterpreted by Sir John as meaning that while "no more women and children should be slain, but that no Englishman was to be left alive."* The point about 'no Englishman being left alive' is quite contrary to the official version of the events. Thus, the following paragraph occurs in the 'Memorandum' of Colonel Williams, Military Secretary and Commissioner of Police, North-Western Provinces, which forms part of the *Kanpur Narrative* :

"A man of great influence in the city, and a government official, has related a circumstance that is strange, if true ; viz. that whilst the massacre was being carried on at the ghat, a trooper of the 2nd Cavalry reported to the Nana, then at Savada house, that his enemies, their wives and children were exterminated. Some one present remarked, 'Yes, it was true, for an infant of a month old was seen floating down the stream.' On hearing which, the Nana replied that '*for the destruction of women and children, there was no necessity*' and directed the sawar to return with an order to stay their slaughter."

There is no mention here of Nana Saheb having said anything even suggestive of the point that 'no Englishman was to be left alive'.† Sir John Kaye has thus in his rhetoric imported into the context something which is not there and which is also not borne out by the officially recorded evidence.

It is not clear exactly to whom Nana Saheb's order was addressed—it might have been either Bala Rao, his brother, or Rao Saheb, his nephew, for Sherer has recorded‡ that it was possibly one of these who gave orders for the slaughter to cease. Thereupon, those who were still uninjured were all collected together and carried off towards a large house called "Salavadar" or Savada Kothi in the south-east corner of the parade ground. What precisely happened thereafter is imperfectly known, for Sherer's Account only mentions that it seemed likely that here "the men were at once selected from amongst the women and children, and there and then slaughtered. The women were all huddled together into an apartment, and kept close prisoners".‡

During the confusion at the Ghat, some sawars carried away a few European ladies—whether with good or evil intention is difficult

*Kaye, Vol. II, p. 342.

†According to Savarkar, Nana Saheb's order to the sawar was "Kill the Englishmen, but no harm is to be done to the women and children". But the former part of the order as quoted by Savarkar has not been historically proved.

‡Sherer's Account, page 8.

to say—good if they meant to protect them from death or injury. When Nana Saheb was informed about this he made the offending sepoys give up the ladies on pain of severe punishment. And afterwards some of these men were actually punished by Nana Saheb. In spite of this, the younger Miss Wheeler, who had been carried away on horseback by a trooper of the 2nd Cavalry, could not be restored because the sawar had gone out of Nana Saheb's reach. The pathetic story of this unfortunate girl and certain other incidents at the Sattichaura Ghat form the subject of the next chapter.

The official version also records that though the events at the Ghat (and later at Bibighar) were horrible, the women-folk were not subjected to dishonour. This is what Commissioner Thornhill has put down in his Report :

". . . the more searching the investigation into the details of those horrible events, the greater has become the assurance that the rumours of atrocious indignities upon the person of our country-women, which at one time were so rife, are almost without foundation.

"It is not to be denied that one or two exceptional cases may have occurred, but, as a general rule, the extirpation of our race in India was the object by which these murderers were actuated; and in the persecution of this design they were swayed by no passion short of the thirst of blood.

"The investigations recently completed by Col. Williams appear to place this long-vexed question beyond a doubt: and the hearts of those who have been so tortured with the thoughts of what their dearest relatives may have suffered before death, can now accept with confidence the no small consolation which the result of these searching enquiries has offered them."*

D. THE BOAT THAT ESCAPED

In the midst of firing and confusion one boat, escaping the fire in its thatch, drifted down the stream. The occupants of the boat included Mowbray Thomson, Delafosse, Murphy and Sullivan. The boat moved with volleys of shots fired on it from the bank and before long many lay dead. The wounded and the dead were so entangled with each other that it was a problem to separate them. Those who survived had nothing to eat. On its journey the boat was followed by a boat of the rebels who shot arrows on the occupants. Somehow the day passed and the boat continued its journey the next day. It was again followed by some fifty armed rebels and was now grounded on a sand bank. Desperate as the survivors were they fell upon the rebels heavily, killing all except five or six. The rebels' boat which was seized contained a quantity of ammunition, but no food which was sorely needed.

The next day another boat of the rebels began to pursue them. At the same time they were also being fired upon by the mutineers on the bank. The fugitives then divided themselves into two parties—one landed on the shore and the other remained on the boat and faced the attacking boat of the mutineers. The party which landed on the bank consisted of seven men. They then fired on the men at the bank and the latter retreated. When after repulsing the mutineers these men went towards their boat they found that it was not there. They were in great difficulty for their pursuers had returned back to attack them again. Finding no alternative they ran to take refuge in a nearby temple guarding it by their bayonets. The rebels surrounded the temple and lit a fire at its door and threw bags of powder on it. In order to escape certain death by suffocation, the men got out of the temple and tried to run away. In the flight they were again attacked and three of their party were killed. The four survivors, namely Mowbray Thomson, Delafosse, Murphy and Sullivan, all good

*Paras. 7, 8 and 9 of Thornhill's Report to Government, dated April 28, 1859.

swimmers, jumped into the river and swam on.

The person who had attacked the Europeans on the shore was Babu Ram Baksh, a powerful taluqdar who with his men had come against them. On the restoration of order, he wandered about in disguise and ultimately settled down at a ghat in Varanasi. His family barber was with him. One day in a fit of rage the Raja struck the barber with his sandal whereupon in utter disgust the barber went to inform the authorities. Babu Ram Baksh was immediately arrested, tried and hanged.

The boat from which Mowbray Thomson and six others had disembarked and which had drifted away leaving this party on the shore was later overtaken by the pursuing boat of the mutineers and the occupants captured. There were eighty of them comprising men, women and children. They were taken to Kanpur. On June 30, the women and children were separated and confined in the Savada Kothi where other Europeans were already imprisoned. The separated men were put to death.

To return to the four survivors, Mowbray Thomson and others. After they had gone down some distance, friendly voices greeted them : "Saheb, Saheb, why keep away ?" So saying they threw their arms in the river as proof of their sincerity. In spite of this assurance, the fugitives felt un-nerved, but they thought that death would now be better than further suffering. They swam to the shore and, naked and exhausted, surrendered. They were given asylum by Raja Drigvijay Singh. But before they went to the Raja's fort, they were fed by the kindly headman of a nearby village. The Raja had sent an elephant to fetch them. In the way they were received kindly by villagemen who offered them milk and sweet-meats.

On June 29, in the evening, they reached the fort of the Raja who heard their woeful tale and expressed surprise at their miraculous escape. He extended to them his traditional hospitality and for three weeks the English fugitives remained there in peace and freedom. Every day, Raja Drigvijay Singh used to come and ask about their comforts. Their wounds were dressed by a local doctor. The Raja advised them not to move out lest they be taken prisoners by the rebels who were still about them. But as their security was getting endangered on account of their long and continued stay, the Raja managed to send them to a friend of his whence they were able to reach Allahabad in safety. These men had remained under the protection of the Raja for about a month.

Five years after, Murphy left his old regiment and came to India in another corps. On his arrival, there was a whispering at the mess that he was the man who had gone through the ordeals of 1857. The matter went up to the Commander-in-Chief who at once appointed him Custodian of the Kanpur Memorial Garden.*

After a spell of leave in England, Mowbray Thomson also returned to India for military duty. He was now and then called to identify the suspected Nana Sahebs, whose account appears in Chapter 43.

*Trevelyan, p. 208.

ANNEXURE

HISTORY OF THE SATTICHAURA GHAT

This Ghat is situated on the right bank of the Ganga towards the southern end of Kanpur. It is at a distance of two miles from Jajmau and is included within the limits of the Cantonment. There is a temple of Lord Shiva at this Ghat.

The Ghat lays claim to no antiquity. It is believed to have been constructed only a hundred and fifty years ago. Originally, the place was a burning ground for the dead. Some 250 years ago two ladies became *sati* at this spot and since then the Ghat began to be known as the Sattichaura Ghat. In the Cantonment registers it is recorded by this name together with the name *Massacre Ghat* which was given to it after the happenings there on June 27, 1857.

Of the two ladies who became *sati*, one belonged to a Dubey Brahman family—the exact spot is still marked by a masonry platform. The other lady was the widow of a blacksmith and at the place of her immolation a kachcha platform exists. Even today ladies of the Dubey family collect at the pucca chaura every year on the last Monday of the month of Baisakh and carry on music throughout the night. At the close of the celebration, the *prasad* of the *sati* is distributed.

After the two *sati* incidents a small hamlet began to be raised gradually near the place and the hamlet came to be known as Sattichaura village.

The residents of Sattichaura were largely boatmen or mallahas. They transported goods to distant places on their boats. The river transport trade was a flourishing one because in those days there were no railways nor motor trucks ; river traffic was, therefore, an important means of transport. The boatmen of this village were prosperous and owned numerous large boats.

One of these boatmen, by name Hardeva, was a moneyed man with a charitable disposition. It was he who built the Ghat and the temple on it. The temple is still known by his name as the temple of Hardeva. The people of the village called the Ghat also as the Ghat of Hardeva.

Hardeva's place as the mukhiya of the boatmen was, on his death, taken by his son or nephew, by name Samadhan, who lived during the time of the mutiny. He, along with other boatmen (Buddhu Chaudhari, Lochan Mallah and others), had provided boats for the carriage of Englishmen to Allahabad.

On restoration of British authority the Government burnt the village of Sattichaura as a measure of reprisal. A part of the temple is also said to have been destroyed by them. The ruins of the houses can still be seen on the east side of the village. The images of the temple were also removed and thrown out. The women and children belonging to the families of Samadhan, Buddhu Chaudhari and Lochan were shot dead. The village was deserted, the residents taking up their abode at other places. The images which were thrown outside the temple were picked up at night by some residents and in due course were installed in other temples. One of these images, of Sanwaliya Shah, was installed in the temple at Gola Ghat and is still there. Every year to this day a well-decorated boat goes from Sattichaura Ghat to Gola Ghat where, after worshipping the image of Sanwaliya Shah, celebrations are held. A part of the broken *argha* of the image of Lord Shiva, which was installed in the Hardeva temple, is still kept in Sattichaura village.

To commemorate the happenings of June 27, 1857, the British erected a Memorial Cross on the Ghat. The monument was later in 1920 made over to the Central Archaeological Department by which it was declared as a protected monument under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act. The monument so protected was described in a notification of the Archaeological Department as : "A Cross situated on the Massacre Ghat in Kanpur with an area of 14 sq. yds. on a partly demolished temple in the angle formed by river Ganga on the north and a driving road to the east." In November 1959, the Government of India decided to *de-protect* the monument, and the necessary notification was issued accordingly.

It was at this Ghat that Brigadier Jwala Prasad was hanged on May 31, 1860. He had taken a prominent part in the uprising at Kanpur, being in command of the Indian army. After the final re-occupation of Kanpur he, along with other revolutionaries, had made his way to Nepal where he was apprehended by the Nepal Darbar and made over to the British Government. He was tried and found guilty of the happenings at Sattichaura Ghat and was sentenced to death. It is also said that Samadhan, Buddhu Chaudhari and Lochan Mallah were also executed at this place. A part of the temple is also said to have been destroyed by the British.

During the British days, the Ghat was a deserted place—only a few people went there for morning walk. Since Independence the place has acquired some importance and each year on August 16 celebrations are held in memory of the martyrs of 1857. A mela is also held on the occasion in which a wrestling match is the special attraction.

A few years ago, the people of Kanpur established at the place an institution called Mahashakti Yogashram. It is housed in a building of its own. Some other pucca buildings have also sprung up in the locality. The authorities of this institution have installed images in the temple of Hardeva. Regular worship is now done at this temple which has acquired historical importance.*

*This account is based on an article of Sri Shrinivas Balaji Hardikar of Kanpur and published in the *Pratap* of May 5, 1959.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

GENERAL WHEELER AND HIS DAUGHTERS

A. MYSTERY ABOUT YOUNGER MISS WHEELER.

NO DISHONOUR TO ENGLISH LADIES.

EVIDENCE ABOUT MISS WHEELER.

MISS WHEELER'S SUICIDE.

B. ELDER MISS WHEELER AND SAD END OF THE GENERAL.

C. NANA SAHEB'S CHARACTER UPHELD.

यो च वस्ससतं जीवे अपस्सं धम्ममुत्तमं ।
एकाहं जीवतं सेय्यो पस्सतो धम्ममुत्तमं* ॥

–LORD BUDDHA (See *Dhammapada* V–16.)

A. MYSTERY ABOUT YOUNGER MISS WHEELER.

Major-General Sir Hugh Wheeler, K. C. B., was a military officer of distinction and experience. At the time of the rebellion he was stationed at Kanpur as Commander of the Kanpur Military Division. He was well over seventy years of age and had with him his family consisting of Lady Wheeler, a son, Lieutenant G. R. Wheeler, who was an officer in the 1*st* Native Infantry, and two unmarried daughters. Lt. Wheeler had already been killed by a round shot in the entrenchment before the General had surrendered his garrison to Nana Saheb. The General himself was killed in the incidents which took place at the Sattichaura Ghat on June 27, 1857, while his wife and elder daughter are also known to have been killed either on the same day or later at Bibighar.

The fate of the younger Miss Wheeler has, however, remained unknown and constitutes one of the mysteries of the history of 1857. One account is that this unfortunate girl, after having been taken away from Sattichaura Ghat by a sawar, committed suicide by jumping into a well. Another version is that, having been converted to Islam by the sawar, she passed the rest of her melancholy life in duress in the sawar's zenana. A third account is that she was taken to Lucknow and lived there as a Muslim lady. After the reconquest of Kanpur, British officers

*Though one should live for a hundred years blind to the excellent doctrine, better to live one single day realizing that excellent doctrine.

made strenuous efforts to discover her, in case she was alive. But no trace of her could be found nor could anything be known definitely about her fate.

NO DISHONOUR TO ENGLISH LADIES

In the Report, dated January 13, 1859, of Mr. Sherer, District Magistrate of Kanpur, made through the Commissioner, Allahabad Division, to the Government of the then North-Western Provinces, a passing reference has been made to the case of Miss Wheeler. In dealing with the question of possible dishonour of English ladies, Mr. Sherer has observed that it is most heartless to the friends of those who had perished to argue whether dishonour to these ladies was *likely* to have been caused or not. Mr. Sherer's point is that the question should be decided on *evidence* and not on thin *possibilities* of what may or may not have occurred. And as regards evidence, Mr. Sherer's conclusion is that there is hardly any evidence to support the case of dishonour. He then refers to Miss Wheeler and observes as follows :

"With regard to poor Miss Wheeler, if the drummer's evidence that he saw her at Futtehgurh be true, the other story of her *drowning* herself in a well here* must be false, and *vice versa*. This case is not as yet so clear.

Mr. Sherer concludes the point about dishonour by saying that, apart from the case of Miss Wheeler and of another "girl in Calcutta", he had heard of no other cases.

EVIDENCE ABOUT MISS WHEELER

The drummer to whom Mr. Sherer refers was Mr. John Fitchett. He was a native of Arcot, was enlisted in 1846 and was attached to the 6th Native Infantry as drummer. He was one of the many persons whose depositions were taken in 1858-59 at Kanpur under the direction of Lt.-Colonel G. W. Williams, Commissioner of Military Police, N. W. P. To a question put to Fitchett whether any of the ladies confined in the Savada house were taken away by rebel soldiers, he replied in the negative. He proceeded to add that the youngest daughter of General Wheeler was taken out of the river by a sawar of the 2nd Cavalry at the time of the happenings at the Sattichaura Ghat. The sawar took her to the city. Mr. Fitchett added that he had heard sepoy Karim Ali say that she had been made a Mohammedan and that he (Karim Ali) had seen her in a *sarai*.

To another question, Mr. Fitchett replied that he had heard that Miss Wheeler had killed the sawar, his wife and three children and then jumped down a well.

"*Question* : Do you know whether this was true ?"

"*Answer* : It was not, for I saw the lady afterwards with the mutineers between Kanpur and Fatehgarh. I heard from the sepoys that the Nana had demanded Miss Wheeler to be given up ; the sawar refused to comply, and the rumour was given out that she had destroyed herself."

That Miss Wheeler was taken out of the water and carried away by a sawar is, of course, not in doubt. Apart from the evidence of Fitchett, many other witnesses have testified to this effect. William Clarke,† musician of the 6th Native Infantry, said that at the Ghat he had seen two sawars carrying a lady on horse-back. He described her as wearing "a Chintz gown, which appeared to be wet ; she seemed to be 18 or 19 years of age". But he could not say whether she was General Wheeler's daughter. He said that he had heard a rumour to the effect that a sawar had carried away the General's daughter. Ewaz Khan, trooper of the Second Cavalry stated that he had heard

*Kanpur.

†Deposition no. 2.

that Nizam Ali, a sawar of his own unit, had carried away General Wheeler's youngest daughter. He described Nizam Ali Khan as a Pathan, resident of Rampur, aged 22 or 23 years with a fair complexion, height about 5 feet 7 inches, long nose, dark eyes and a beard with a small moustache.

Shaikh Elahee Baksh* of the 56*th* Native Infantry had seen the lady being carried off. "She had a green dress, her legs were hanging over on one side of the horse and the sawar held her with one arm". He had afterwards heard it said amongst the sepoys that she was General Wheeler's youngest daughter and that she had later killed the sawar and thrown herself into a well. Bhola Khan† sepoy and Ram Baksh, pay havaldar, both of the 52nd Regiment, Native Infantry, had heard that a daughter of General Wheeler had killed nine men and then thrown herself into a well. Many other witnesses‡ corroborated this version in essential particulars, but they had all *heard* about this—none had *seen* the occurrence with his own eyes.

The official version of the events, then compiled, also accepts as correct the fact of Miss Wheeler having been so carried away. Also accepted as correct is the fact that actually four English ladies and three Eurasian women were carried off at the Ghat by some sawars of the 2*nd* Cavalry and that all, with the exception of Miss Wheeler, were delivered up to Nana Saheb and were placed in confinement with the rest at the Savada house§ and were later removed to Bibighar. What happened to Miss Wheeler eventually is shrouded in mystery.

Further in his evidence, Mr. Fitchett stated that he had seen a European lady amongst the women-folk of the sawars when, after their defeat in the battle of Kanpur, they were proceeding with their wives and children to Fatehgarh. "She was in a native dress, silk pyjamahs and a chuddur over her head, but was riding on a side saddle". He added that he saw her every day during the march of the sepoys to Fatehgarh. But he was not sure whether she was General Wheeler's daughter, as he had never seen her before and was not allowed to speak to her. She was the only European lady in the camp and everyone said that she was the General's daughter.

Fitchett had seen the European lady again when the mutineers marched back from Fatehgarh to Bithoor to join the Nana who had invited them, promising to disburse their arrears of pay before they were required to fight again. "The European lady" went with the sawars of the Second Cavalry and remained for several days with the wives and families of the mutineers in a village about ten miles from Bithoor, under a guard of 150 or 200 sepoys. After Nana Saheb's defeat in the battle of Bithoor, these mutineers with their families again went to Fatehgarh where after some days they were taken in the service of Ahmad Yar Khan. Fitchett says that he again saw the "European lady" with the women-folk of the 2*nd* Cavalry-men on a day near about the end of August, 1857. He also heard that Ahmad Yar Khan "had demanded the European lady ; the sawars refused to give her up ; they said she had been saved at the risk of her protector's life and had become a Mohammedan". He also heard that Ahmad Yar Khan would fight "the sawars who were quite determined to defend the lady with their lives ; they said they would be cut to pieces before they gave her up". The next day Fitchett saw two sawars going towards Kanpur. "The European lady was with them and from that time I missed her".

*Deposition no. 11.
†Deposition no. 14.
‡Deposition nos. 12 and 13.
§Page 14 of the "Synopsis of the Evidence of the Kanpur Mutiny". Also Nanak Chand's Diary, entry under the date "27th June, Saturday".

Fitchett added that the "sawar took her to his village" the name of which he did not know.

Doubts have been raised on some of the other points in the testimony of Fitchett, but so far as his narration of events about this "European lady" is concerned there is no reason to suppose that he was not telling the truth. He could have no motive in concocting facts which were not true in relation to this particular matter. In the course of his evidence he reminded himself that he was on oath, and there are no circumstances to warrant that he was perjuring himself. At the same time he clearly stated that, as he had never previously seen Miss Wheeler nor had he any opportunity to talk to her during the marches, he could not say whether the woman whom he calls "the European lady" was or was not the daughter of General Wheeler. So his evidence leaves the identity of this lady unaccounted for.

It further appears from the deposition of William Thomas De'Cruze,* another musician of the *6th* Native Infantry Regiment, that "the European lady" in the camp of the mutineers, when they were marching from Kanpur to Fatehgarh, was the daughter of "some indigo planter". He had no first hand knowledge of this, but was told so by others. He also made the following significant statement :

"The lady brought away by the trooper did not reach Futtehgarh, but only some 12 miles this side of it, at a place called Khudaganj Sarai, where it commenced to be talked about that some trooper was bringing away a Christian woman; the trooper, therefore, deserted her, and no trace of her could be found."

MISS WHEELER'S SUICIDE

Save for the evidence of Fitchett, the bulk of the evidence points to the conclusion that Miss Wheeler had committed suicide by jumping into a well. This version is not really against the evidence of Fitchett because when he said that he saw a European lady in the camp of the families of the soldiers during their march to Fatehgarh, he was not at all definite whether this lady was Miss Wheeler or some other because he had not seen Miss Wheeler previously nor did he get an opportunity to talk to the "European lady" in the camp.

The "suicide" version is also consistent with the fact that after the restoration of British rule, the people were completely subjugated and it could not have been possible for any Indian to have kept an English lady in his household under duress. This was particularly so because the officers of the Government were very anxious to discover the whereabouts of Miss Wheeler. This is also borne out by the fact that many of the witnesses examined by Col. Williams, some two years after the happenings at Kanpur, were asked questions about Miss Wheeler in the expectation that some of them might be knowing anything definite about her.

It is also improbable that, if Miss Wheeler were alive on the restoration of British authority, she would not have escaped from the custody of her captors. She could never have reconciled herself to living in the obscurity of an Indian family, belonging, as she did, to the family of a high military officer.

B. ELDER MISS WHEELER AND SAD END OF THE GENERAL.

As regards the elder Miss Wheeler, it is certain that she met her death, but where, is not quite clear. According to the evidence of Parmanand, General Wheeler's Jamadar,† the two Misses Wheeler were with the General in the third boat which escaped from Sattichaura. In the confusion that followed on the boat being hit by a cannon ball near

*Deposition no. 3.

†Deposition no. 33.

Jajmau, one of the girls, according to Parmanand, jumped into the water. Parmanand saw her being "taken out of the Nala", by a cavalry sawar. But he could not say whether this was the elder or the younger Miss Wheeler. He added that he also did not know whether the sawar took her away or killed her. As there is overwhelming evidence that the younger Miss Wheeler was carried away** by the sawar, the conclusion can be drawn that the elder Miss Wheeler either perished here or later at Bibighar. If she was taken from here and included in the group of ladies and children at the Savada Kothi then she must have been amongst the ladies later killed at Bibighar. The same remarks are applicable to Lady Wheeler.

As for the General himself he met a sad death. From the entrenchment to the Ghat he was carried on the elephant which was generally used by him and which with its howdah and its driver, Kasim Khan, had been made available to him by the magnanimity of Nana Saheb. The elephant, in its first round, had taken Lady Wheeler and her two daughters to the Ghat. The driver then returned to fetch the General whom, meeting on the way mounted on a galloway,† he likewise conveyed to the boats. Then follows some conflicting evidence as to where and how the General was killed. Two witnesses (Mrs. Bradshaw and Mrs. Sett) testified‡ that the General came last and was carried into the water on a palki towards the boat which he was to occupy. These ladies said that they heard the General saying to the sawar escorting the palki, "Carry me a little further towards the boat"; but the sawar answered, "No, get out here". As the General got out of the palki, head foremost, the witnesses added, the sawar gave him a cut with his sword into the neck, and he fell into the water.

On the other hand Fitchett's evidence was that he had first heard from the sawars that General Wheeler was killed at the Ghat by the sawars; that he took off his cap and sword and belt and said, "They might then kill him". Shortly afterwards, Fitchett had heard some other sawars§ say that "General Wheeler's boat had got away".

Evidence of other witnesses points to General Wheeler's death having taken place near Najafgarh on the down-stream side of the Ganga at some distance from Kanpur. The General was in one of the three boats which had escaped the disaster at the Sattichaura Ghat. This boat was overtaken by the pursuers after it had stuck on a sand-bank near Najafgarh. Jamadar Sadhoo Singh was in command of the party of the 2nd Cavalry which was pursuing this boat. Those of the occupants of the boat who resisted arrest by this party were killed on the spot and the rest were sent as prisoners to Kanpur. From the statements of two troopers$ of the party it appears that General Wheeler perished here. This is borne out also by the evidence of Parmanand, Jamadar,|| in the employ of General Wheeler. He stated that he was with the General in the third boat which escaped from Sattichaura. The boat was hit by a cannon ball below the village of Jajmau about a gun-shot distance from Sattichaura Ghat. The boat swung round and "all the sahibs became

**Whether she was carried away here or at the Sattichaura Ghat becomes doubtful in the face of the Jamadar's evidence.

†One of a small but strong breed of horses, peculiar to Galloway, a district in Scotland.

‡Deposition no. 7.

§These were the sawars who had brought the surviving ladies and children from the Sattichaura Ghat to the Savada Kothi.

$Tilak Singh and Ghaffur Khan (*vide* page 14 of the "Synopsis of the Evidence").

||Deposition no. 33.

terrified". Parmanand himself ran off to save his life and hid himself in a *jhao* jungle. He could not, therefore, say what happened to the General, but from other evidence it can be concluded that General Wheeler was killed here because he was not amongst the prisoners of this boat who were brought to Kanpur. The "Synopsis of Evidence" attached to the Report of Colonel Williams also gives credence to the version of General Wheeler's death taking place near Najafgarh or Jajmau.*

C. NANA SAHEB'S CHARACTER UPHELD.

In the dark events of Sattichaura and Bibighar, which have polluted the fair name of our countrymen, there is one ray of light here also—light which upholds the character of Nana Saheb. It is in evidence that Nana Saheb had given orders that English women and children who had survived the incidents at Sattichaura Ghat were not to be touched (molested) and that all women and children were to be given up†. It has also been established by trustworthy evidence that Nana Saheb made the soldiers return the ladies whom they had taken at the Ghat and that as a penalty for their misdeeds he dismissed them from service‡. Only the sawar who had taken away Miss Wheeler did not comply with the Nana's order, nor could he be found to receive his punishment before Nana Saheb had to leave Kanpur and Bithoor after the loss of the second battle of Kanpur.

Miss Wheeler's Valour

Whatever may have happened to Miss Wheeler, her case will remain a tragic one, more tragic perhaps than the cases of the women who were slain at Bibighar. The latter had met instantaneous though cruel deaths, while poor Miss Wheeler had to suffer dishonour before she could end her miserable existence—a fate which she did not deserve as the affectionate daughter of an old and respected officer of high rank. At the same time this deep tragedy has an ennobling lesson, for it must be recorded to the credit of Miss Wheeler that she showed extraordinary courage and self-respect in that, instead of reconciling herself to a life of shame, she chose the only honourable course open to her in those dark days, of ending her life in the fashion of the Rajput ladies of yore. But before this ill-fated girl destroyed herself she gave proof of great valour by killing her captor and several others, the total number killed by her being put variously at 5 and 9.

Such was the end of this brave and honourable girl who by so dying proved the truth of the poet's verse :

मृत्युश्च को वापयशः स्वकीयम् ।**

*Page 14 of the Synopsis.

†Depositions of Mrs. Eliza Bradshaw and Mrs. Elizabeth Sett—*vide* deposition no. 6.

‡Ghaus Mohammad of the 56th Native Infantry had deposed that Nana Saheb had issued orders by beat of tomtom that all European women and children were to be given up—Deposition no. 14.

**What is death ?—one's own infamy.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

THE ACCESSION OF NANA SAHEB

A. CELEBRATIONS AT KANPUR.

B. NANA SAHEB PROCLAIMED PESHWA AT BITHOOR.

C. THE CASE OF NANHE NAWAB.

D. THE ADMINISTRATION OF KANPUR.

A. CELEBRATIONS AT KANPUR.

In the evening of June 27, 1857, all the Indian troops were paraded for a general review by Nana Saheb. According to Shepherd,* these troops consisted of :

2nd Light Infantry ;

1st, 53rd and 56th Regiments of Native Infantry of Kanpur ;

1st and 2nd Avadh Irregular Cavalry ;

Two Regiments of Avadh Native Infantry from Lucknow ;

17th Regiment of Native Infantry and 13th Irregular Cavalry from Azamgarh ;

12th Regiment of Native Infantry ;

14th Irregular Cavalry ;

No. 18 Field Battery from Nowgong ;

Detachment of 10th Native Infantry from Allahabad, and

Half regiment of newly-raised infantry at Kanpur.

These troops had joined at Kanpur from time to time since June 6. In addition, there was a large body of zamindars and others of the neighbouring districts who had come well-armed to assist Nana Saheb. Even after June 27 troops continued to come to Kanpur from the other places. By July 10, their number had swelled to 20,000 fighting men of all classes.

This large army assembled on the plain of Savada on the north of the vacated entrenchment. Three salutes were fired, one of 21 guns for Nana Saheb as the sovereign, 17 each for Rao Saheb and Bala Saheb and 11 each for Brigadier Jwala Prasad and Tatya Tope. Thereafter, a short speech was delivered to the army praising them for their great courage and valour in obtaining a complete victory over the British and promising them a reward of one lakh of rupees.†

Kanpur had now been cleared of the Europeans. On June 28, in the afternoon, a darbar of surpassing grandeur was organised in honour of Nana Saheb. At first the six Infantry and Cavalry Regiments, each man of which was in great spirits, were

**Freedom Struggle in U. P.*, volume IV, p. 587.

†It is said, however, that the payment was put off from day-to-day and eventually the army did not receive anything.

drilled. The artillery-men were shown special favour as they had played a prominent part in reducing the entrenchment. A salute of 101 guns was first fired in honour of the Emperor Bahadur Shah. Then 21 guns were fired to greet Nana Saheb as the Emperor's representative. Bala Saheb, brother to Nana Saheb, and Rao Saheb, his nephew, were each honoured with a salute of 17 guns. For the Commanders, Tatya Tope and Tika Singh, 11 guns were fired. A large assembly of revolutionaries was present at the darbar at which Nana Saheb announced the grant of rewards to the soldiers. A big procession was also taken out the same day.

Present in this darbar were the zamindars of the adjoining areas, with their forces, and the gentry of Kanpur. The darbar was inaugurated in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. All present accepted Nana Saheb as the Peshwa, but the formal ceremony of installation was left to be performed at Bithoor after two days. It is also said that a sum of rupees one lakh was distributed to the sepoys at this darbar.

Bala Saheb was very popular in the army from the very beginning. On his arrival at the darbar, he was given a great ovation. When Nana Saheb himself came the people acclaimed him with shouts of joy.

B. NANA SAHEB PROCLAIMED PESHWA AT BITHOOR.

A day was then fixed for the formal accession of Nana Saheb as the Peshwa. June 30 was found to be an auspicious day for the ceremony. As it was also decided that the installation should take place at Bithoor Nana Saheb and Bala left for that place, having directed Baba Bhatt, Azimullah Khan, Brigadier Jwala Prasad and Munshi Shah Ali to conduct the affairs at Kanpur. This was on the 30th.

At 5 o'clock in the evening of June 30* the ceremony of installation was performed in the Nana's palace at Bithoor. In accordance with traditional usage, Nana Saheb was enthroned as *Peshwa* amidst the chanting of Vedic hymns. Tilak was fixed to his forehead and a costly turban was put on his head. Guns were fired and the large assemblage present raised acclamations blessing the new ruler. Nana Saheb was seated on the historic throne of the Peshwas which Maharaja Baji Rao had brought with him from Poona.

An announcement was made that a large quantity of gold had been sent to Kanpur to be cast into bangles for the soldiers who had taken conspicuous part in the struggle. According to Sir George Trevelyan, Azimullah Khan received the revenue of the Ganga Canal as the reward for his services. At night there were illuminations and fireworks at Bithoor as well as at Kanpur. Hundreds of citizens from Kanpur had sent presents to Nana Saheb on this auspicious occasion.

In the Diary of Azimullah Khan, it is stated that a procession with great pomp and show was also taken out at Bithoor and the temples on the ghats of the Ganga were decorated and illuminated.

The celebrations continued for six days during which feasts were given and music and dance parties held. Thousands of Brahmans were fed.

On July 1, the following proclamation was issued under the authority of the Peshwa :

"As by the kindness of God and the good fortune of the Emperor all the Christians who were at Delhi, Poonah, Sattara, and other places, and even those five thousand European soldiers who went in disguise into the former city and were discovered, are destroyed and sent to hell by the pious and sagacious troops, who are firm in their religion ; and as they have been all

*According to another version the accession took place on July 1, in the morning.

conquered by the present Government, and as no trace of them is left in these places, it is the duty of all the subjects and servants of the Government to rejoice at the delightful intelligence, and carry on their respective work with comfort and ease.

"As by the bounty of the glorious Almighty and the enemy-destroying fortune of the Emperor the yellow-faced and narrow-minded people have been sent to hell, and Kanpur has been conquered, it is necessary that all the subjects and land-owners should be as obedient to the present Government as they had been to the former one; that all the Government servants should promptly and cheerfully engage their whole mind in executing the orders of the Government; that is the incumbent duty of all the peasants and landed proprietors of very district to rejoice at the thought that the Christians have been sent to hell, and both the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions have been confirmed; and that they should as usual be obedient to the authorities of the Government, and never suffer any complaint against themselves to reach the ears of the higher authority."*

The same day (July 1) an order was sent to Hulas Singh Kotwal in these terms: "Whereas, by the grace of God and fortune of the King, all the English at Poona and in Punna have been slain and sent to hell, and five thousand English who were at Delhi have been put to the sword by the royal troops. The Government is now everywhere victorious; you are, therefore, ordered to proclaim these glad tidings in all cities and villages by beat of drum, that all may rejoice on hearing them. All cause for apprehension is now removed."†

C. THE CASE OF NANHE NAWAB

While Nana Saheb was at Bithoor, the administration of Kanpur was being carried on by Baba Bhatt who had been appointed Collector and by other functionaries appointed under the new regime, prominent among whom were Azimullah Khan, Bala Saheb, Brigadier Jwala Prasad and General Tika Singh. But Nana Saheb's absence from Kanpur led to certain intrigues. Suggestions were made in certain quarters that Nanhe Nawab should be the ruler of Kanpur and not Nana Saheb. This gentleman had taken a prominent part in the bombarding of the entrenchment, being in-charge of a portion of the artillery which he is said to have directed with some ability. During the earlier part of the out-break this nobleman had, owing to some misunderstanding with Nana Saheb, been kept as a prisoner, but later matters were made up and the Nawab was given command over one of the batteries. In commanding his battery, Nanhe Nawab was also firing with his own hands and it is said that one of his shots burnt the thatched roof of the central barrack of the entrenchment. Nana Saheb was so delighted by the working of his battery that he presented to him five thousand rupees in cash and it is also said that hopes were held out to him that, on the extermination of the English, he would be made the Governor of Kanpur.

Nanhe Nawab was one of the sons of Motumaddaula, known also as Agha Mir, a Minister of King Nasiruddin Hyder of Avadh. The Minister having lost his post in 1830 went to live at Kanpur. He was in receipt of a pension assigned to him out of the interest on the loan of Rs. one crore given by King Ghaziuddin Hyder to the East India Company. His own pension was Rs.20,000 per annum while his wife and daughter and the eldest son were in receipt of an aggregate sum of Rs.5,000. On his death in 1833, the pension was allotted to his heirs, and Nanhe Nawab, whose original name was Mohammad Ali Khan, received a pension of Rs.4,500 per annum with which he was maintaining himself in his father's mansion at Kanpur.

Nanhe Nawab was held in high esteem by the Muslims amongst whom he had a large following. While Nana Saheb was at

*Cawnpore—by Sir George Trevelyan, pp. 226-227.
†Kaye, volume II, p. 673.

Bithoor an incident occurred at Kanpur which greatly agitated the Muslims who began to think of putting Nanhe Nawab as the ruler of Kanpur. It so happened that Baba Bhatt (Nana Saheb's elder brother), who was in general charge of the administration, had the hands of a Muslim butcher chopped off for the crime of slaughtering a cow. Another circumstance which caused some general dissatisfaction was the distribution of the promised rewards of pay which caused much wrangling and bitter speeches against Nana Saheb.

It was in this context that the rule of the Nana was threatened and Nanhe Nawab was to take his place. Nana Saheb then soon returned to Kanpur and succeeded in pacifying the Muslims and others ; several Muslims were also appointed to the administration. Thus Nanhe Nawab, who himself had no grievance against Nana Saheb and was never keen for power, was left where he was.

After the restoration of British authority, Nanhe Nawab's case was investigated by a court of enquiry which cleared him of the murder of Europeans at Kanpur. But he did not choose to stay on at Kanpur. He went to Mecca in 1861 and died there.

On return from Bithoor on July 6, Nana Saheb took up his residence in Noor Mohammad's hotel near what is now called Phoolbagh. The building of Bibighar in which the English prisoners were confined was near at hand.

D. THE ADMINISTRATION OF KANPUR

It was difficult to keep the large body of 20,000 troops of all sorts under control ; it appears that they indulged in excesses and plunders on the well-to-do citizens. Under the plea of searching for Europeans said to be concealed in the houses of rich mahajans, their houses were searched and they were deprived of their valuables. The depredations of this uncontrollable army affected both the rich and the poor and all felt equally miserable. It is said that the general population began to desire the return of the English so that they could resume their peaceful occupations.

The administration of the district was in the hands of Baba Bhatt, the elder brother of Nana Saheb. He was assisted by some of the old officials of the British regime, the most prominent among them being Ram Lal, Deputy Collector. On the restoration of British authority, the part played by Ram Lal was found out from the papers which were seized from the office of Baba Bhatt, and being unable to put up any defence for what he had done, he was condemned and hanged immediately after General Havelock's occupation of Kanpur.

The papers referred to also disclosed the names of other officials who too were punished by the British. Some informers assisted the officers by disclosing the names of persons who had paid complimentary visits to Nana Saheb or had sent him presents or who had joined him actively or acquiesced in his rule. One of these informers had a sad end. He was a sweeper in whose possession some jewellery, which had belonged to the lady prisoners, was later found. So he was tried and hanged.*

At first a son of Haji Khanum had been appointed Kotwal of the city. He was later replaced by Hulas Singh who had held the post under British rule and was an efficient official. The influential residents and mahajans who had much faith in him prevailed upon Nana Saheb to re-appoint him to that office. Paying tribute to Hulas Singh Colonel Williams has recorded : "The city

*Havelock's March—pp. 201–3.

was kept in continual alarm by reported intentions to plunder; and it is clearly proved from the evidence that the sagacity of its Kotwal, Hoolas Singh, alone preserved it from this danger, threatened alike by mutineers in search of wealth, and insurgent zamindars or land-holders thirsty to be avenged on the commercial classes who had bought their estates when sold by decrees of the civil courts".*

Arrangements for carrying on the administration as best as the disturbed circumstances permitted were made. Courts were formed under the charge of Baba Bhatt (Nana Saheb's elder brother). The punishments awarded by these courts were rather crude for normal times, but were perhaps justified in the unsettled conditions then prevailing as a result of change of sovereignty. Bad characters were soon hauled up to be paraded on donkeys throughout the city, and their houses levelled with the ground. The hands of a thief were cut off for the offence of plunder; the same punishment was given to a butcher for killing a cow.*

Arrangements for the collection of revenue were also made. On June 30, Baba Bhatt issued orders to tahsildars to send in the revenue. It was also ordered that all individuals not delivering up concealed European property would be punished, that all houses having such property secreted in them were to be searched. Also that arrangements be made for distributing rewards with gold bangles to the sepoys.

On an analysis of the evidence Colonel Williams had come to the conclusion that "the Nana and his court possessed little or no authority over the rebel troops who, it is evident, did just as they pleased—manned the attacking batteries, and joined in the assaults or not as they deemed fit—the greater portion taking their ease, lounging in the bazars and on the banks of the canal, and plundering the provisions as they were brought into the city." He goes on to add that the new officials openly indulged in extortion and plunder, that parties crossing the ferries were charged a rupee a head, and if unable to pay were detained for days. Even the mutineers from Varanasi on their way to join the Nana's camp were not allowed to escape payment for crossing at the Jajmau ferry.

A section of the higher classes of Kanpur as well as the masses firmly believed that the power of the late rulers had in truth been swept away, as it were by one fierce blast, and to these the rule of Nana Saheb appeared to have come to stay. They willingly attended his court. There were others, however, who hoped that, with their resources and power, the British would not take long to return; these men kept themselves aloof from the new administration. If they attended the Nana's court or waited on him they did so reluctantly and only in the hope of saving themselves. They bided their time—ready to return with the first ebb of the tide. There were then others who sat on the fence trying to play a double game temporizing in some instances with the new regime and yet keeping themselves sufficiently protected from acts which might mean their misfortune should the English re-appear.*

At the same time it has been recorded to the credit of Nana Saheb that he was considerate to the British prisoners. "Beyond the fact of their being kept in confinement they do not appear to have been treated with indignity, nor with greater hardship than prisoners of any class or race under native rule"—so writes Colonel Williams in his Review of Evidence. He adds that clothes

*Colonel Williams' *Review of Evidence.*

recovered from washermen were distributed amongst the captives ; chapaties with dal, prepared by cooks especially appointed for the purpose, were daily served to them. Later, at the request of the prisoners, meat, in lieu of dal, was substituted and milk given to the children. A lady of Nana Saheb's house-hold staff was also appointed to supervise the affairs of the female prisoners and to supply their wants. Similarly, the Fatehgarh fugitives were very kindly treated at Bithoor by Rao Saheb who provided them with food and comfort.

Imaginary and garbled accounts of atrocities alleged to have been committed by Indians at Kanpur have to be read with caution, for there are instances which clearly establish that Nana Saheb's administration was, if anything, erring on the side of moderation. There is, thus, the case of Mr. Shepherd, who was a clerk in the Commissariat and one of the refugees in the entrenchment. His wife and daughter were killed during the early part of the siege. He thereupon undertook the task of getting information from the camp of the sepoys, and of sowing dissensions amongst the people of Kanpur. He dressed himself as an Indian cook and went out. But no sooner had he gone a little distance from the entrenchment than he was arrested and brought before Nana Saheb. Questions were put to him to which he gave no satisfactory replies. He was first put in a prison and later on July 12 was brought before the court. He was awarded 3 years rigorous imprisonment. This Mr. Shepherd lived to write later a book on the happenings at Kanpur. This incident makes it clear that even in the heat of war Nana Saheb's justice was merciful. This was in contradiction with that of the Europeans who on capturing any Indian in or near the entrenchment instantly put him to death.

Nana Saheb had a great following. When Kanpur became free, the whole of the North-Western Provinces was flooded with a great wave of revolt. Every day, fresh batches of leading zamindars, not only of the Kanpur district, but other surrounding areas, came with their men to join Nana Saheb. According to the Kanpur Gazetteer the Chaudhries of Bithoor were with him from the first and these were followed by the Raja of Thathia in the Farrukhabad district, Moti Singh of Nanamau, the Rajputs of Kakadeo and other villages in the suburbs, and those of Panki Gangagunj. The more prominent were the Rajas of Sheorajpur and Sachendi, who brought with them most of the Chandels, and the Raja of Nar, the chief of the Gaurs, all of whom took an active part in the attack on the entrenchment. Practically the whole of the tahsils of Bithoor, Jajmau, Sheorajpur, Narval and Rasulabad were in open rebellion. Several tahsildars threw in their lot with the Nana.

The Gazetteer also records that when the success of the mutineers became known the rebellion spread into the furthest parts of the district and the zamindars of Sheoli, Sakhrej, Khanpur, Gajner, Rasdhan and many other places headed by the Goshains of Sikandra, came into Kanpur, while further aid was given to the rebels from beyond the Ganga. In this manner practically the whole of the Rajputs, and particularly the Chauhans, Gaurs, Chandels, Panwars and Gautams, joined in the rising. It is further stated that the part they took was not an inconsiderable one, since it has been averred that the English garrison could have subdued the discontented and disheartened mutineers but for the backing supplied by the zamindars. The Gazetteer mentions the reason for these people joining the rebellion ; it was that the majority of the landlords had suffered from the revenue administration of the past half century and were consequently disaffected.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

RECONQUEST OF KANPUR BY THE BRITISH

A. HAVELOCK'S START FROM ALLAHABAD.

B. BATTLES IN THE WAY :

BATTLE OF FATEHPUR.

BATTLES OF AUNG AND PANDU NADI.

BATTLE OF KANPUR.

C. THE ENGLISH RE-OCCUPY KANPUR.

A. HAVELOCK'S START FROM ALLAHABAD

Through his spies, General Wheeler had been able to send some messages for military assistance to Allahabad, not knowing that Allahabad too was in revolt since June 6. But the up-rising there, though intense, was short-lived and, with fresh European troops which had since arrived from Varanasi with Colonel Neill, the British were able to regain the city on June 17. Colonel Neill, an officer new to India, had been summoned from Madras to Calcutta by Lord Canning soon after the news from Meerut and Delhi had reached the Governor-General. From Calcutta he proceeded to Varanasi remaining there from June 3 to 9. On June 5. the sepoys at Varanasi were driven to mutiny by a mismanaged affair of disarming them. Colonel Neill took over command from Brigadier Ponsoby and inflicted indiscriminate and cruel death on the mutinous sepoys and disaffected people. "It was Neill's hand that signed in letters of blood the doom of Kanpur and decreed the ordeal of Lucknow."*

Neill left Varanasi on June 9 and, arriving at Allahabad on June 11, assumed the command of the garrison in the Fort. On restoration of authority in the city, Neill tried to go to Kanpur or to send a force there, but he could get no transport because the city had been completely deserted on account of the cruelties ~~imposed by him on~~ the people. "The vengeance exacted in Allahabad and the neighbourhood was so mercilessly complete that the inhabitants fled in terror before the very name of Englishmen. In consequence carriage, tents, provisions and stores were simply unobtainable and, in spite of the most strenuous exertions of the Commissariat, Neill was compelled, to his extreme distress, to remain in Allahabad throughout the month of June."†

*Dr. Sen, page 154.

†Allahabad Gazetteer, page 184.

On account of its strong fort and strategic situation Allahabad was now becoming a great military base for the British. It was from here that troops were continuously despatched to feed the armies of Havelock, Outram and later of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell. Lord Canning himself proceeded from Calcutta to Allahabad in January 1858 to be nearer the scene of operations. In February the same year he formed the whole of the North-Western Provinces, excluding the Delhi division, into a single Lieutenant-Governorship and transferred the seat of the Local Government from Agra to Allahabad.

It was only on June 30 that Colonel Neill was able to despatch a column of 400 Europeans, 300 Sikhs and 120 irregulars and two guns to Kanpur under Major Renaud. This detachment was to act as a sort of advance guard to keep the road open for the march of the main force which was to follow a few days later. The primary object of the column, however, was to strike terror in the country-side, for, not satisfied by his atrocities at Allahabad, Neill had instructed Major Renaud "to punish and destroy all guilty villages along the route to Fatehpur". The Major "followed his instructions faithfully; but as every village along the road had joined in the revolt, the punishment inflicted was indiscriminate and terribly severe : so much indeed that when Havelock left Allahabad on the 7th he found the country-side deserted, supplies unprocurable and corpses hanging from every tree."*

Major Renaud was followed by Havelock who had arrived at Allahabad on July 1. Havelock had been in the Company's Army since 1823 and had seen service in many capacities, having received the honour of Commander of the Bath for his exploits in Afghanistan. In 1856 he was in command of a division in the Persian War under General Outram. On the conclusion of that campaign, he had returned to Bombay in the early part of 1857. At the out-break of the rebellion he proceeded to Calcutta where, on the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, the Governor-General at once appointed him Brigadier-General with orders to proceed immediately to Kanpur for the relief of Sir Hugh Wheeler and thence to Lucknow to support Sir Henry Lawrence. From Calcutta, General Havelock then proceeded to Allahabad to form the movable column which was to operate in the districts in revolt. From Allahabad he now marched to Kanpur at the head of 1,000 Europeans, 130 Sikhs, 40 volunteer horsemen and an artillery of eight guns.

The news of the Sattichaura happenings had reached Allahabad on July 2. A steamer was then promptly despatched up the Ganga to rescue the fugitives, but it failed in the mission, as the fugitives had soon been caught by the Kanpur sepoys. As Renaud had started only with a small force, word was now sent to him to slow down his advance and await the arrival of the re-inforcements. He too had by now heard of the fall of Kanpur when at Sirathu where he halted. The force under Havelock now joined him on July 12, near Fatehpur after having made forced marches.

With General Havelock was Mr. Sherer, the Collector of Fatehpur, who had fled to Banda on the night of June 9 at the signs of the approaching mutiny at his station. From Banda he found his way to Allahabad whence he proceeded to Kanpur with the relieving party. Later, he became Collector of Kanpur and Fatehpur. He is the author of the book *Havelock's March on Kanpur* from which some passages have been quoted in the present volume.

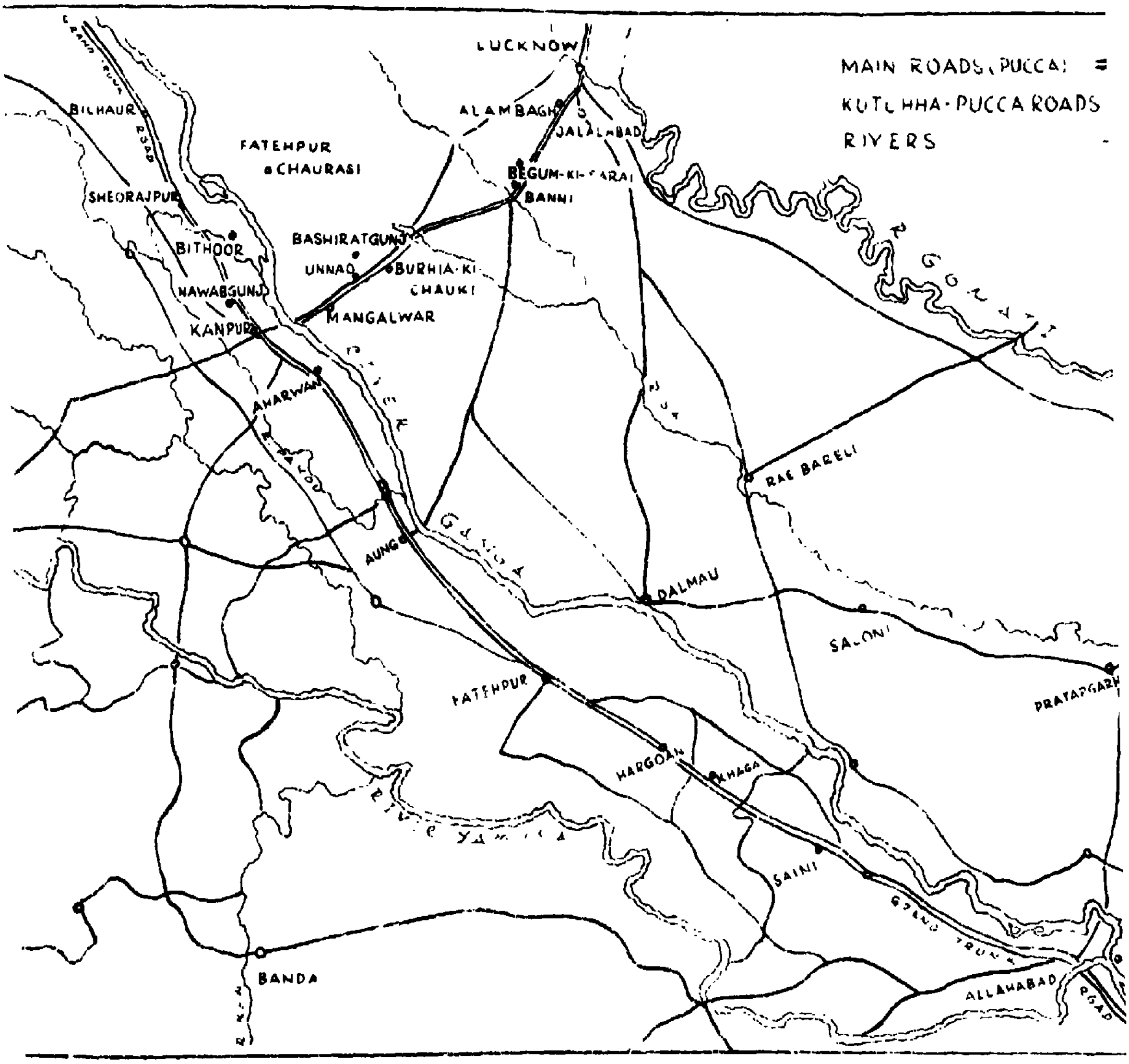
The armies of Renaud and Havelock committed great atrocities on their march from Allahabad to Kanpur. According to Sir Charles Dilke, villages after villages were

*Allahabad Gazetteer, page 185.



NANA SAHEB'S ISHTEHAR

This proclamation is dated [illegible] Zilkad 1273 (Hijri) equivalent to July 6, 1857. It tells the story of the greased cartridges and reflects the fear on the part of the people that the Government intended to convert them to Christianity. The style of the proclamation is simple and clear such as could easily be understood by the common people for whom it was intended.



MAIN CENTRES OF ACTION IN JULY-SEPTEMBER 1857

Map showing the places which formed the main centres of action between the nationalist forces and the British troops during July, August and September 1857. This map will assist in following the account of General Havelock's march from Allahabad to Kanpur given in sections A and B of this chapter. It will also be helpful in the appreciation of the description at page 200-01 under the sectional heading 'Havelock towards Lucknow' in chapter 28.

cruelly set on fire and the innocent villagers were mercilessly destroyed. This, Sir Charles regretfully records, was most shameful.

B. BATTLES IN THE WAY

BATTLE OF FATEHPUR

On July 7, Nana Saheb sent a division under Brigadier Jwala Prasad to check the British advance. His force consisted of 3,500 men (two regiments of cavalry and three of infantry) with 12 guns. He reached Fatehpur on July 12, and precipitated a battle with the British troops under a misapprehension that he was dealing only with Renaud's advance-guard and not with the combined forces of Havelock and Renaud. He had not received timely information of the junction of the two British parties.

The European troops were camping in an open plain at a distance of four miles from Fatehpur. Before marching on the town Havelock sent a patrol of cavalry to reconnoitre the area round Fatehpur. When this party was near the town, Jwala Prasad ordered his horsemen to rush upon them. The British cavalry galloped back to their camp pursued by the Indian cavalry. The Indian infantry with their guns followed the horsemen to give battle. Havelock lost no time in deploying his troops in battle array and launched a counter-attack. Jwala Prasad's men were until now under the mistaken impression that they had to deal only with the small detachment of Renaud. So they were taken completely by surprise when they came face to face with a large well-organised European force. The British guns and rifles now opened on them forcing a hasty retreat.

The British pushed forward causing confusion in the nationalist troops. Yet they tried to re-form themselves and made a bold stand at a place further down the road. But they were dismayed by the rifle-fire of the Europeans which reached them at an unexpected distance. In the meanwhile, Captain Maud was able to move his guns in the flank and his accurate fire demolished the remaining confidence of the sepoys who now fell back on their strong defensive positions in the town of Fatehpur.

The British force, however, continued to move forward to capture these positions too. The Indian infantry offered strong resistance, but this availed them nothing and one by one eleven of their guns were captured along with quantities of ammunition and baggage. Still they made one final stand at a distance of one mile beyond Fatehpur on the Kanpur side before retiring to the village of Aung.

Jwala Prasad's defeat was primarily due to defective military tactics. He had never seen battle before and was no match to the experienced Havelock who had fought in many actions and was adept in tactical warfare. Jwala Prasad's rout arose from two causes--firstly he had no idea that he was going to attack a large European force, and secondly he made the mistake of choosing an open plain for the battle in preference to the defensive position which the town of Fatehpur afforded.

The defeat of the nationalist forces at Fatehpur greatly encouraged the troops under Havelock's command—in fact the morale of the whole British army was resuscitated because this was the first check that the nationalist troops had met in the open field. Havelock was filled with pride and issued an order of the day praising his men for their pluck. From this moment the name of Havelock became famous not only in India but in England too.

On having obtained possession of Fatehpur, Havelock gave the town to plunder which was mercilessly carried out. The shops and houses were sacked and the town was set on fire.

BATTLES OF AUNG AND PANDU NADI

After Fatehpur, Jwala Prasad took up his position in the village of Aung which afforded a strong defensive position. Fresh troops and guns had arrived from Kanpur to reinforce him. General Tika Singh and Maulvi Liaqat Ali of Allahabad were also there.

Havelock's force resumed their march at early dawn of July 15 reaching Aung after day-break. The General sent about one-third of his men as advance guard towards the village. Indian guns then opened fire and the sepoys advanced in front of their main entrenched position. There was now a long fierce fight. The sepoys fought bravely, but could not long stand the withering fire of the British guns and their Enfield rifles. So after a determined stand they had to vacate their entrenched position in the village at the point of the bayonet.

They now retired to a position down the road near the bridge of the Pandu river—a position which had been strongly prepared beforehand. A good deal of fighting material and equipment fell into the hands of the British here also. But in the fierce action Major Renaud was mortally wounded and was taken to the rear of the force. He died of his wounds later at Kanpur.

Pandu is a small rivulet, but it had become swollen by rains and was impassable. The only way to Kanpur lay over the bridge—a fine masonry construction. The strategic position of this bridge was very great. Tatya Tope made plans to defend this bridge as long as possible. The plan also included the blowing up of the bridge in case its defence proved unsuccessful. A strong force under the command of Bala Rao had also arrived. General Havelock realised the importance of the bridge, because if the bridge were gone, his advance to Kanpur would have been halted. He, therefore, determined to secure it before Tatya Tope's troops could blow it up. Although his men were tired, he ordered the force to march to the bridge and they reached it in two hours. When the British force approached it, there was a sudden fire from the defenders. By a bold move General Havelock was nevertheless able to secure the bridge. An attempt to blow it up had been made by Bala Rao before he retired to a defensive position previously prepared. But the explosion, which was aimed at the bridge, was unsuccessful ; only the parapet walls were destroyed, the arch remaining steady.

The failure to blow up the bridge was fatal to the defending force. Several Indian writers have lamented this mistake which sealed the fate of Kanpur. It has been said that the plan to blow up the bridge had been unskilfully executed. The fire of English guns on the bridge was very heavy ; further a bend of the river favourably enabled Captain Maud to plant his battery in such a way as to pour the fire in the flank of the nationalist forces causing confusion amongst them. So in the absence of a 'cool head or a steady hand' the attempt to blow up the bridge failed. Here also, the inexperience of Indian commanders helped the British, for any one with keen knowledge of military tactics would have blown up the bridge while retiring from the village of Aung after sustaining a reverse there.

The British force having now crossed the bridge occupied the opposite bank of the river. There they remained for the rest of the 15th. The next morning they were again on the march.

BATTLE OF KANPUR

The battle of Kanpur was now fought in three defensive positions on one and the same day, July 16. On the afternoon of the previous day, Bala Rao, with a wound on his right shoulder caused by a musket-ball, carried information to Nana Saheb that Havelock's army had successfully crossed the Pandu river and was now advancing on Kanpur. Nana Saheb called a conference of his

advisers to discuss the future course of action. The council was held at Noor Mohammad's hotel which was now the headquarters of Nana Saheb. Opinion was divided ; three courses were suggested and discussed—to leave Kanpur and make a stand at Bithoor ; to make a junction with the nationalist forces at Fatehgarh under Nawab Tafazzul Husain of Farrukhabad ; to meet the enemy on the road to Kanpur. The last-mentioned course was adopted after much discussion.

So in the morning of July 16, preparations were made for the defence of Kanpur and the defence of the Peshwaship of Nana Saheb. To dispute the advance of the British General, Nana Saheb himself set out at the head of 5,000 men. The position selected for this decisive battle was at village Ahirwan, a short distance to the south of Kanpur near the junction of the Grand Trunk Road and the road to Kanpur.

All through the morning Nana Saheb's lieutenants, Tatya Tope, General Tika Singh and Brigadier Jawla Prasad, were engaged in the disposition of the troops and posting guns at proper places. The troops were posted a mile behind the fork created by the junction of the two roads. They were arranged in the form of an arc bisecting the two roads. Both the roads were cut across by entrenchments so as to make them impassable. On the left side of the formation some heavy guns had been planted and its right side was protected by a walled village with a grove of mango trees providing excellent shelter. Heavy guns had also been posted on this side. On both sides, there were sepoys of the infantry, while the 2nd Cavalry was in the rear.

This formidable disposition of the nationalist troops has been admired by Kaye as being the work of a brain possessing high military skill. Who carried that brain has been left unsaid by the great historian* who contents himself by remarking that "the troops of Nana Saheb were disposed of in a manner which taxed all the power of the British Commander who had been studying the art of war all his life. To Havelock's column advancing along the great high road from Allahabad . . . . the sepoy forces presented a formidable front".†

Resuming his march at day-break on July 16, General Havelock covered 16 miles to arrive at the village of Mahrajpur, six miles from Kanpur. He halted here for refreshments, meanwhile collecting information about the disposition of Nana Saheb's troops.

The General now planned the details of the attack. He was in no doubt that a frontal attack would be disastrous ; he also ruled out an attack on the right flank. He saw certain advantages in an attack on the left flank. After explaining his plans to his lieutenants, Havelock resumed his march at 1.30 p.m. when the heat of the sun was intense and by which several of his soldiers died. Some others lagged behind only to be cut up later by Nana's horsemen. Still the march continued for three miles after which there was a fierce encounter between the two armies. Both sides suffered considerable losses, but the struggle was grim and sustained.

All the while General Havelock was in the midst of action directing the operations. The superior strategy of British generalship again succeeded and a part of the nationalist army was obliged to fall back in a wooded village on the Kanpur Road which provided a strong defensive position. The rest of the troops joined the centre of their force

*It is generally believed, however, that the man who arranged the force in this dexterous manner was no other than Tatya Tope.

†Kaye, volume II, page 375.

against the impending British attack. In the centre of their position a heavy howitzer was posted and the troops rallied behind it. A desperate hand-to-hand struggle ensued after a short pause. Nana Saheb's troops, however, again lost their field and fell back on a wooded village where some of the sepoys had already taken their positions.

At this village again there was a stiff combat of artillery between the two forces. Here the sepoys showed great vigour and poured a heavy fire on the enemy lines. The British troops were weary and exhausted, but General Havelock encouraged them by enquiring who would take that village. Thereupon a section of his force bounded forward towards the village and the rest followed quickly. The charge was successful and the sepoys retreated upon Kanpur. It now seemed that the day was lost to the nationalist force.

Nana Saheb, however, made one more resolute stand, although the successive routs had baffled him not a little. He took up a position on the road to the Kanpur Cantonment. Three guns, one a heavy 24-pounder and the others of small calibre, were planted here and fresh troops arrived from Kanpur to give new strength to his defence. The battle here was going to be the very crisis of his future. Being well aware of this he "threw all his individual energies into the work before him and tried what personal encouragement could do to stimulate his troops."* He flashed about on horse-back encouraging his soldiers in the last effort of supreme resistance. Writes J. C. Marshman in his Memoirs of Sir Henry Havelock: "He (Nana Saheb) was seen riding about among his soldiers, the band and the buglers striking up as he approached. The greatest animation pervaded the enemy ranks."†

The result was favourable. The onward march of the British was halted and the "great tidal wave of British conquest seemed for a moment to be receding."‡ The gun-bullocks of the English were so completely exhausted that the artillery could not be brought in front, the soldiers too were physically exhausted. They lay down on the ground, partly to rest and partly to escape the tearing fire of the Indian guns. The Nana's force was in great exultation. His infantry were moving forward and the cavalry were spreading themselves out to encompass the enemy in swift destruction whilst the guns continued to pour forth their round shot in unintermittent stream.

General Havelock, perceiving that the battle would be lost the next moment, sent his son to the spot where the men were lying down with an order to rise and charge. The command was immediately obeyed and the men rushed forward, with young Havelock at their head, to capture the heavy 24-pounder gun which had been doing so much havoc. Major Havelock steered his horse straight for the muzzle of the gun. Its round shot was now substituted by grape which began to make deadly gaps in the enemy's advancing column. Still the column did not stop and eventually succeeded in getting hold of the gun after a spirited charge. The field was thereupon lost to the nationalist force who now retired in confused flight. Maud's battery soon came up to the front and by a heavy cannonade on the retreating sepoys completed the victory in favour of the English by nightfall.

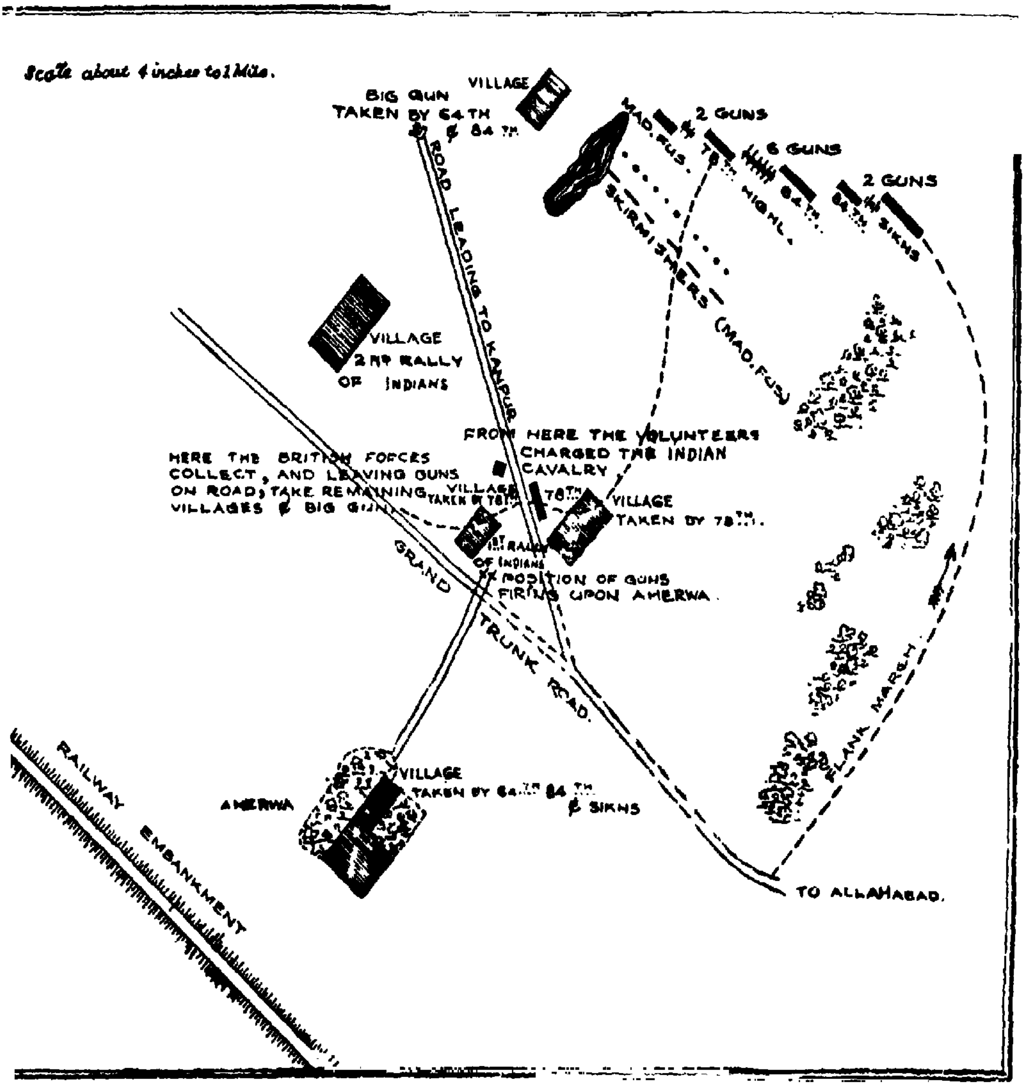
Havelock's troops were now completely exhausted and could not move to the town which was only two miles away. They bivouacked as the sun went down, "every

*Kaye, volume II, pp. 379-80.

†Page 210.

‡Kaye, volume II, page 380.





BATTLE OF KANPUR
July 16, 1857
(Scale about 4 inches to a mile)



GENERAL HAVELOCK

No sacrifice was too great for him in his endeavour to regain Kanpur. When at the battle of the Pandu river the British force was in a critical situation, the General asked his son to rush and capture the big howitzer of the nationalist army, which was doing much damage to his wearied troops. The risk involved was great, but young Havelock instinctively obeyed and succeeded in seizing the gun an event which turned the combat in favour of his father's force



GENERAL TATYA TOPE

The final defence of Kanpur against the unchecked advance of General Havelock was planned by Tatya Tope with such a military skill as to have drawn the admiration of Sir John Kaye. The disposition of the nationalist troops was made "in a manner which taxed all the power of the British Commander who had been studying the art of war all his life", so wrote Sir John in his *History of the Sepoy War*. Due to their superior strategy and discipline the British were however, able to recapture Kanpur, and this was the starting point of their subsequent successes in actions in other theatres of the conflict.

man too weary to need a pillow and too thirsty not to relish even a draught of dirty water."*

Some of the nationalist troops now crossed into Avadh territory during the night. They then reached Lucknow to aid the Indian army besieging the British garrison in the Residency. The majority of the troops, however, made their way on the Grand Trunk Road to Farrukhabad.

C. THE ENGLISH RE-OCCUPY KANPUR

The next morning, July 17, Havelock proceeded to occupy the station which had been in the hands of the nationalists since early June. The sepoys had completely evacuated the town except for a small body of horsemen who had been left behind to blow up the magazine which had previously been missed. As the British advance-guard neared the Cantonment a terrific explosion was heard rending the ground beneath every one's feet like a great earthquake. An immense balloon-shaped cloud simultaneously went up into the sky. This was at 6.30 a.m. The magazine was completely burnt down.

The British flag now again flew over Kanpur. General Havelock issued an order of the day saying : "Soldiers, your General is satisfied, more than satisfied, with you. He has never seen steadier and more devoted troops. Between the 7th and the 16th you have, under the Indian sun of July, marched a hundred and twenty-six miles and fought four actions."

Within a few days Brigadier-General Havelock informed the authorities of his victory over Kanpur. In a letter, dated July 20, he wrote to the Army Headquarters : "I have the pleasure to announce that the triumph of the Maratha pretender, Nana Saheb, adopted nephew (sic) of the late ex-Peshwa Bajee Rao, has been of short duration. The treacherous proceedings by which he composed the destruction of the force under the gallant Sir Hugh Wheeler have already been reported to the Commander-in-Chief. I have now to announce the complete discomfiture of his force, under his personal command, and the capture of his cannon, followed by the re-occupation of this station which, since the 6th June, he had been devastating and desecrating by every form of cruelty and oppression."

"Neill forgot that the entire population of India could not be exterminated, and without the co operation of the local people, he could not collect transport animals and carts. His strong measures had scared away the peasants and farmers from the countryside, and with them disappeared the humble labourers who administered to the daily needs of the army. —DR. S. N. SEN, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, p. 156.

*Kaye, volume II, page 381.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

NANA SAHEB LEAVES KANPUR AND BITHOOR

On the loss of the battle of Kanpur Nana Saheb had no alternative but to fly for his life. He had no time to go to Noor Mohammad's Hotel, his headquarters at Kanpur. The British found it just as it had been left by him—on one side of the two central rooms he had his bed-room and on the opposite side were rooms for *pooja* and cooking ; the central rooms, which were very commodious, were reserved for darbar. The witnesses examined by Colonel Williams testified that Nana Saheb came back to the city at nightfall riding a chestnut horse drenched in perspiration, and with bleeding flanks. He was then seen galloping towards Bithoor accompanied by some attendant sawars. It is not clear whether the wounded Bala Rao was also with him or whether he had preceded him ; possibly he was with him.

Sherer's Account contains the following description of Nana Saheb's departure : "To the best of my information, he left Bithoor on the evening of the 17th. He found it impossible to get any of the soldiers to rally round him ; they had thrown off restraint, and abused him and Baba Bhutt in open terms, clamouring with threatening gestures for money, and so off, helter-skelter, for Fatehgarh. That evening he embarked himself and the ladies of his family on a large boat. He had given notice that he would drown himself, I suppose as a blind to prevent pursuit, and it was understood that the signal was to be when the light was put out. The Gungapootras were watching on the shore. About midstream the light was extinguished, and with a yell, that must have reached the boat, the mendicant Brahmins rushed up to the palace, and commenced plundering all they could lay their hands on. The crafty Nana was disembarking in the darkness on the other side ; but if in so callous a heart, any bitter reflections could arise, the ingratitude of his adherents and the falseness of those he had cherished, might well have induced them."*

According to Charles Ball, Nana Saheb reviewed his troops before leaving Bithoor. A salute of 100 guns was fired in honour of the Delhi Emperor, 80 in honour of his father, Baji Rao II, and 60 in his own name. Twenty-one guns each were also fired in honour of his mother and wife.

Some months afterwards two spies, who had been commissioned by Government to obtain information about Miss Wheeler, passed six days in the camp of Nana Saheb in the Avadh jungles. They met a sepoy in the vicinity of the camp. On being asked why they had come there the spies represented themselves as desirous of obtaining service and reminded the soldier that they were old acquaintances of his own. The man, who was a good-natured person, told them that it was a dangerous neighbourhood for strangers, but promised that, since they had ventured so far, he would introduce them to his fellow-men.

These spies found twelve to fifteen thousand people collected in the jungle. Food was

*Page 11 of Sherer's Account.

scarce and dear. There were only two tents in which Nana Saheb and the immediate members of his family were living. The followers lived under trees in miserable condition in tattered clothes. The most poverty-stricken and dejected of all the sepoys were troopers of the 2nd Cavalry. The number of horse-men in the camp was about a hundred with two guns. Nana Saheb, attended by a servant with an umbrella, went daily to bathe in a river which flowed at the foot of the hill where his pavilion stood. A crowd regularly assembled to pay their respects as he passed. The two spies particularly noticed certain officers of his household : the treasurer and paymaster. the driver of his bullock-carriage, his chief cook, and chief gardener, his barber, his sweeper, his boatman and his wrestlers, both Hindu and Mohammedan. Bala Saheb was also with him. Their wives were living at an adjoining range of hillocks in company with the widows of Maharaja Baji Rao. The ladies of the court travelled in six palanquins and the gentlemen on as many elephants.* After a few weeks, Nana Saheb left this place and eventually found his way to the solitude and the privations of the Nepal Tarai.

Vishnu Godse in his *Majha Pravas* has described how Nana Saheb with his family crossed the Ganga at Bithoor and arrived in Avadh territory. Godse was not an eye-witness to the happenings at Kanpur ; he had heard about them while at Gwalior. His description cannot, therefore, be ascribed the authority due to a historical narrative, yet the account given by him is substantially in conformity with the accepted version in its essential particulars. In additiou, it also contains certain details not found elsewhere. An abstract of Godse's account is given in the following paragraphs.

On arriving at his palace at Bithoor Nana Saheb explained to the ladies of the household that the British would now soon reach Bithoor, that it was incumbent on them immediately to cross the Ganga and reach Lucknow where their further line of action could be chalked out in consultation with the Begum of Avadh. The ladies were asked to take with them whatever was necessary, but having been struck dumb by the news of the Kanpur disaster they knew not what to take with them. The boats were ready at the ghat and not a minute was to be lost. They at once got ready to start.

Nana Saheb himself spread a large shawl on the ground and collected in it all the precious relics of the Peshwas. Amongst these was a loin-cloth of Guru Ram Das which the saint had presented to Chhatrapati Shivaji. This used to be kept in a sandalwood box in the temple where it was daily worshipped. The household jewellery was also collected and tied in the shawl.

In a melancholy mood the party then left the palace and arrived at the ghat. There Nana Saheb offered prayers to mother Ganga and, after making obeisance to the large crowd of Brahmans and others who had accompanied him to the ghat, asked the boatmen to unmoor the boat in which the party had by now taken their seats.

The party in the boat consisted of Nana Saheb, Rao Saheb, Bala Saheb, the wives of these persons and the widow of Baji Rao and his unmarried daughter. A faithful servant, by name Raghoba, also jumped into the boat in spite of Nana Saheb's remonstrance. He said he had been brought up in the Peshwa's family from the age of one year when his mother had died and that in this hour of misfortune he could not keep away. In this way there were nine persons on the boat. The boatmen had been previously instructed not to accompany the party and so they came down. Thereupon, Rao Saheb

*Deposition no. 63 (of Narain and Bhow Rao, residents of Bithoor) in Colonel Williams' Enquiry.

lighted six or seven candles and the boat started with Bala Saheb and Raghoba at the oars. As soon as the boat moved, the men and women present at the ghat raised a cry of extreme anguish resembling that which is uttered when a dead body is taken out of a house.

After the boat had proceeded to a distance of one mile the candles were put off. Then, untying the shawl, Nana Saheb put into the Ganga the precious heir-looms, saying that now after 150 years when Peshwaship had ended these pieces had little use in the world. The spectators at the ghat seeing the light suddenly go off thought that the boat had capsized in the Ganga and that the party had been drowned.

Reaching the other side of the bank, the party had great difficulty in disembarking in the darkness of the night and on account of the existence of an extensive quagmire. The ladies who had been accustomed to a most comfortable life got into knee-deep mud; their condition was most pitiable. After a long time and much distress the party reached dry land.

A village was seen nearby to which the party proceeded and stayed near a temple. After this tiresome journey the ladies were feeling very thirsty, but there was neither bucket nor rope to draw water. The loin-cloths and shawls were then joined together and lowered in a nearby well. When the extremities of the clothes got wet they were pulled out and water squeezed. In this manner the thirst of the ladies was somehow quenched. Day-break was still long off and the party spent the rest of the night in restlessness.

During the preceding day, nobody had taken meals and now, when the day broke, hunger was upon them. But neither the ladies nor the men-folk had any money with them. At this critical moment Raghoba, saying that he had a rupee coin in his pocket, immediately went off to purchase provisions to cook the food.

Neither the men nor the women could eat the crude food prepared by Raghoba, but extreme hunger made them eat a few morsels. No sooner had they finished than there arrived the village *Mamladar*, who had got news that some respectable men and women had arrived in the village. After talks with the men he was convinced that the party belonged to Nana Saheb. He then immediately went to his *garhi* to fetch *palkis* and horses. He insisted on taking the party to his residence. This *Mamladar* had received an order from the Begum of Avadh that Nana Saheb, after his defeat at Kanpur, was proceeding to Lucknow and that, if he came to his village, all arrangements for his stay and comfort be made by the *Mamladar* in the meanwhile. So he made all possible arrangements for the comfort of Nana Saheb and his party at his *garhi*.

(Godse's account closes)

The village at which Nana Saheb was staying was Fatehpur Chaurasi. Before leaving it for Lucknow, Nana Saheb sent his messenger to Queen Hazrat Mahal with a letter soliciting the Begum's permission to enter her capital. The Queen signified her assent. Raja Jai Lal Singh, the Queen's Manager, was directed to take conveyances to Fatehpur Chaurasi and fetch Nana Saheb to Lucknow. Raja Jai Lal Singh proceeded with two camels, some forty carts and 20—25 elephants. When the party left the *garhi* of Jai Singh Chaudhari, it was heavily raining.

At Lucknow, Nana Saheb was welcomed by Nusrat Jang with 200 sawars, two elephants and several camels. According to the directions of the Queen, Nana Saheb was taken to be put up in Sheesh Mahal, the luxurious residence of the former Nawabs of Avadh. This palace was immediately furnished for the distinguished guest and as Nana Saheb entered it 11 guns were fired in

salute.* This was in the third week of August, 1857.

The following item appeared in the Hindu Patriot, dated August 13, 1857: "Nana . . . ., we believe, heads the rebels of Oude, and to rescue the garrison of the Lucknow Residency out of his desperate hands will demand a larger sacrifice than the force under General Havelock can afford."

From Lucknow Nana Saheb went in turn to various places where, in conjunction with the other leaders of the revolt, he fought many engagements with the British. These places included Shahjahanpur (March, 1858), Bareilly (March, 1858), Mohammadi (Bahraich).† Nana Saheb was guiding the operations from these places and fighting actions as best as he could in collaboration with others. Many handicaps came in the way. Success was nowhere in his lot and he was being hotly pursued by the British. Being reduced to extremities in December, 1859, he, along with the Begum of Avadh, crossed into the Nepal jungles. Thereafter, a final and decisive battle was fought on the banks of the Rapti against the forces led by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell. The General's forces were routed and he decided to give up the pursuit. But Nana Saheb too was done up and laid down his arms to pass into obscurity. An account of his last days appears in another chapter.

"The same journal (the *Bengal Harkaru*) notices a statement in one of the French papers to the effect that 'at Calcutta an attack from Nana Saheb was apprehended.' This statement is scarcely more extravagant than those contained in the great number of letters sent to Europe by every mail—The *Hindu Patriot*, December 10, 1857.

*Sayed Kamaluddin Haider Husain's *Sawaneh-Hayat Solatin Avadh*.

†According to certain writers, Nana Saheb was also present at the battle of Bithoor and at the re-conquest of Kanpur by the Gwalior Regiment under Tatya Tope. Other writers have, however, expressed themselves against this view.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

BIBIGHAR

A. WHAT WAS BIBIGHAR.

B. MOTIVE FOR DESTRUCTION OF PRISONERS.

C. HOW DESTRUCTION WAS CARRIED OUT.

To me the meanest flower that blows
Can give thoughts that do often lie
Too deep for tears.

—WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

A. WHAT WAS BIBIGHAR

From June 27 to July 15, 1857, Nana Saheb had under him British prisoners, chiefly women and children, whose number has been variously put at 200 or figures near about it. At the time of their destruction these persons were confined in a bungalow called Bibighar. It was a single-storeyed building constructed in Indian style with a courtyard in the middle.

The name Bibighar was given to this particular house because it had been constructed by an officer, some years before the revolt, for the residence of his Indian mistress. In the early days of the East India Company it was customary for British military officers to have Indian women living with them. These ladies exercised much influence on Indian sepoys. In this way the officers indirectly rendered good service to Government because they became better acquainted with the character of their men and with what was going on in the sepoy lines. In course of time, however this custom tended to become a source of corruption. (Other well-to-do Europeans, whether in service or trade, had also adopted this practice as part of the dignity and style appertaining to their position).

The bungalow was situated in old Cantonment. The site of it now lies within the Tatya Tope Memorial Garden (previously the Memorial Well Garden) adjoining Phool Bagh. The exact place where the bungalow stood was previously demarcated by a small enclosure surrounded by iron railings. Inside the enclosure there was a small marble cross on which the following inscription was engraved :

IN MEMORIUM
IN THIS SPOT STOOD
THE HOUSE OF MASSACRE
JULY 15,
1857.

The railings and the cross are now in the compound of the All-Souls' Church to which the things of the "Memorial Well" were, after the achievement of Independence, removed

under an arrangement with Government—*see* Chapter 46 on MEMORIAL WELL GARDEN.

Nana Saheb had been proclaimed Peshwa on July 1, 1857, at Bithoor. Some days after, news was received that General Havelock. who had marched from Allahabad for the relief of Kanpur, was approaching. A division was sent to check the advance, but it was defeated.

Further encounters took place with similar result. On the afternoon of July 15, Nana Saheb learnt that General Havelock's army had crossed the Pandu river and was on full march on Kanpur. Thereupon he decided, in consultation with his advisers, to meet the advancing force on the road to Kanpur. It was also decided, according to most of the British writers, that the prisoners of Bibighar should be destroyed. Various motives have been imputed for this decision and these have been dealt with later in this chapter.

It has been suggested that the military guard on duty at the bungalow were required to finish the prisoners, but they indirectly declined to shoot the women and children. Thereupon, five or six men are said to have been deputed to kill the inmates which they did by entering the building with swords. Thereafter, the rooms were locked and the following morning, on July 16, 1857, their corpses were thrown in the well within the compound of the bungalow.

A great deal has been written by contemporary British authors about the circumstances preceding the deplorable event and the manner of the actual execution of the orders of destruction and finally the disposal of the corpses. Their accounts are based on the depositions of witnesses which were taken at Kanpur under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Williams, Military Secretary and Commissioner of Police, North-Western Provinces, after the restoration of British authority. The witnesses included Christians, Muslims and Hindus, 63 in all. There was also the journal written by Nanak Chand, a resident of Kanpur. The journal contains a narrative of the events at Kanpur during the "Mutiny". This journal was also drawn upon for preparing the account of the happenings.

B. THE MOTIVE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE PRISONERS

Contemporary British writers have generally accepted the theory that the prisoners had been destroyed in order to remove evidence in the event of the defeat of Nana Saheb's forces by the approaching army of General Havelock. This conclusion has been developed in the following words by Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Williams in his Memorandum, dated March 29, 1859, prepared after the recording of the evidence to which a reference has already been made :

"Reliable evidence, as far as it was procurable regarding the massacre of the helpless captives in the slaughter house, has been recorded, from which the following facts have been gleaned :

* * * * *

that the cause of their destruction was fear of betrayal. should any survive and be recovered by their countrymen ; that on the steady and continued advance of the British and after the second action, in which Bala Saheb was severely wounded in the right shoulder, a hurried council was held ;

that fear and consternation filled the rebel camp, and dismay, the hearts of all ;

that this meeting was attended by many who, by loans of money and aid in various other ways accorded to the Nana, had implicated themselves in the revolt ;

that many and various were the projects suggested for checking the advance of the British, and securing their own safety ;

* * * * *

Yet, notwithstanding that all felt their hour had well-nigh come and that shortly a stern retribution would be exacted for the innocent blood, already so wantonly shed, such was the fear of detection (by many who had aided and abetted their chief) through their recognition by the prisoners, particularly such of them as Mrs. Greenway and other old residents of Kanpur, that no fear of consequences could stay them from further imbruing their hands in blood, and that of women and children, deeming that thus they secured themselves from further detection, especially those who had at that early stage resolved that, should things continue

to go against the rebel faction, they would change sides, and if the evidence recorded be true, many of those present at that council are now again in Government employ." (Page 20 of the *Kanpur Narrative* in the Volume "Mutiny Narratives, North-Western Provinces, 1857-58".)

Another version is that the interception on July 15, 1857, of a letter sent by one of the female prisoners to the British garrison at Allahabad prompted the decision to finish the captives.

And yet a third reason that has been suggested is that the annihilation of the prisoners would probably prevent the further approach of the British who were said to be advancing solely for the purpose of releasing such of their people as were in confinement, and of avenging the blood of those who had been slain at the Sattichaura Ghat. (Synopsis of the Evidence of the Kanpur Mutiny—page 18).

Of the various witnesses who gave evidence about the manner in which the prisoners were destroyed, the statements of the following two persons are reproduced below—these persons heard the account of the happening from the lips of some of those who had carried out the Nana's orders.

(i) *Statement of Panchum, seller of betel leaf, resident of Ooghoo (district Fatehpur)*:

"In the month of July, a year and half ago, I was at my house in Ooghoo, when ten or eleven persons, guards in the Nana's employ, who had fled from Kanpur, came to my shop and asked for *pan* (betel leaf). I showed them new betel leaf, when two of them told me to fetch old betel leaf, otherwise they would take my head off. I accordingly went to another *pan*-seller and brought the kind they asked for, and told them the price of the same, i.e. ten pice. The two men said that they would only give me two pice ; I replied that the betel leaf was worth ten pice and that they ought at least give me eight pice. On which they said that they would kill me and all my family. I stated I was a poor man and had got the betel leaf from another person. They then said that they had shown no pity to the ladies and children whom they had just massacred and who clung to their feet, and that they would not have pity on me. I wept, and my mother, hearing my cry, came out and begged them not to hurt me, and that she would let them have more betel leaf ; after this they drew water from a well close to my house, near a temple, and, conversing among themselves, I heard their companions ask the two men, how many ladies they had killed ; they replied that they had massacred 21 ladies and children, and had received a reward of 21 rupees, and added that at first the Nana ordered the sepoys to massacre the ladies, but they refused, and that they two, with three others, carried out the Nana's orders :

Ques. Do you know the names of those two men ?

Ans. No.

Ques. Were those persons Muslims or Hindus ?

Ans. They were Hindus and had *chandan* applied on their foreheads.

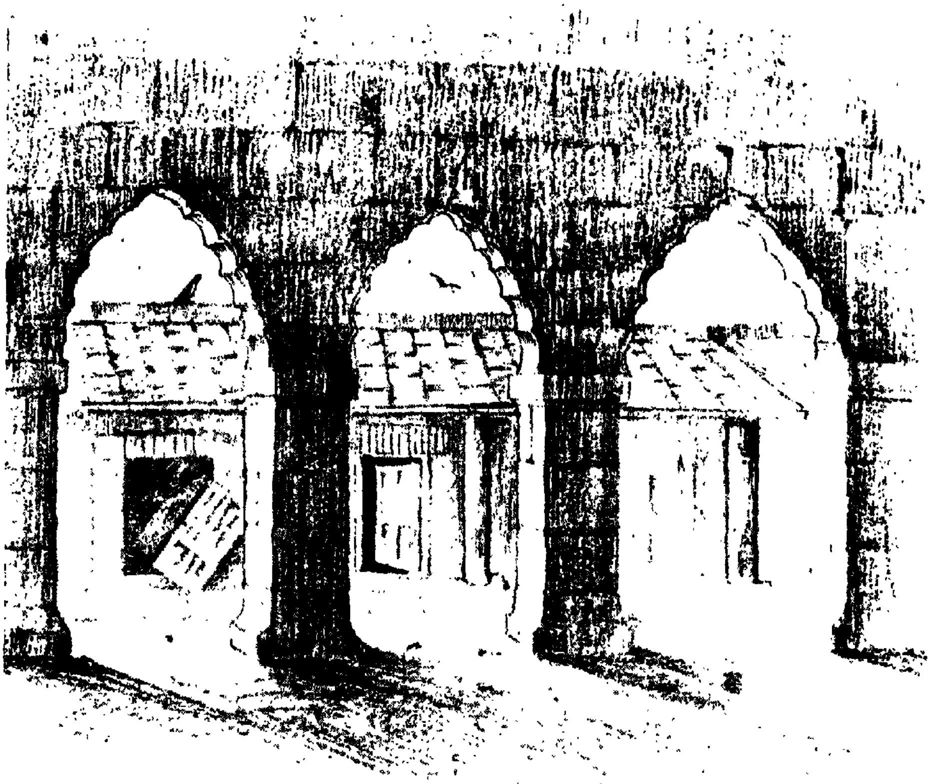
Ques. Did any other person, besides you, see them ?

Ans. Besides my mother, there was no one there ; they frightened me greatly by showing me a naked sword covered with blood, which they said had been used in the massacre of the ladies, and that they would cut off my head with the same.

Ques. From whom did you get the old betel leaf for the two men ?

Ans. From Tujjoo, seller of betel leaf.

(Some portions of the statement have been omitted as being not material to the point.)



BIBIGHAR

It was in this building that the survivors of the Suttichaura Ghat numbering about 200, mostly women and children, were confined. After the re-occupation of Kanpur by the British the building was demolished and its site was indicated by a small enclosure of iron railings with a marble cross inside. It was designated, and rightly, as "THE HOUSE OF MASSACRE."



THE ORIGINAL WELL

[illegible]

In the compound [illegible] this well over which the memorial was raised in the sacred [illegible] of the unfortunate [illegible] whose dead bodies were cast into it on the morning of July 16, 1857.

[illegible]

(ii) ***Statement of Ganga Bishan Mahajan, resident of Ooghoo*** :

Ques. State what you know of the massacre of the ladies on the 15th of July ?

Ans. The truth is that shortly after the Nana fled and the ladies were massacred, I was sitting under a tamarind tree at Ooghoo, where all the men of the village assemble, and was conversing with a few others about the massacre of the Europeans at Kanpur ; they said that the Nana ought not to have murdered the women and children, upon which Souracun (anglicized spelling of Sheo Rakhan) Brahman of Ooghoo stated that when the ladies and gentlemen were massacred, the Nana's officials sent him to kill the ladies, that he struck one with his sword which bent, and he then felt pity and did not again strike ; he showed us the sword which was bent. He said that there were two or three Mohamedans who killed all the ladies and children. The men assembled there saw the sword and heard this. It was also known all over the village. This is the only man of Ooghoo who assisted in the murdering of the Europeans.

Ques. Give the names of those who heard Sheo Rakhan make this statement ?

Ans. There were many assembled, I do not remember all their names, but those that I do remember I give : Thakoor and Bugtah (Bhagat) Aheers ; Kuneeah, Gunga, Sewa, Chota and Ajoodeeah, Brahmans ; Goolwah, Chowkedar of Kaharah Deewar, all these were assembled.

All the villagers heard that Sheo Rakhan was one of the murderers, but since the British rule has been re-established no one, from fright, speaks of it.

Ques. Will these men give true evidence ?

Ans. Yes, I think they will, though some from fright may not do so. If any of the Government officials are sent to the village, I would get all the men state the truth.

Ques. Where is Sheo Rakhan now ?

Ans. I do not know where he is now ; he left the village when the British rule was re-established.

Ques. Why did you not report this before ?

Ans. From fear he would be hung, and his death would be laid on my head, and for this reason no one else gave information.

Ques. When was Sheo Rakhan entertained by the Nana ?

Ans. During the mutiny, but I do not remember the date.

Ques. Were your sons, Bachoo and Mundun, in the service of the Nana ?

Ans. I state the truth ; my sons were never in the Nana's service, but when the Nana fled, the mutineers took Bachoo prisoner into the Nana's camp for about 25 days. Besides this, he never was in the Nana's service, and to clear my sons I state the truth.

In reply to the question about the description of Sheo Rakhan, witness stated, ***inter alia***, that he was about 35 years of age and always carried a sword.

The evidence of Colonel Williams' 63 witnesses does not, however, prove in any conclusive manner all the incidents connected with the happenings. On a study of the depositions of these witnesses the following points emerge :

(i) The evidence of some of these witnesses is contradictory in several essential and basic points.

(ii) The witnesses who have testified to the occurrences at the Sattichaura Ghat and at Bibighar have described in unequivocal terms the happenings both in respect of what they saw and what they heard (*i.e.* the orders, etc., being given by Tatya Tope, Brigadier Jwala Prasad and others). In the confusion that prevailed at the Sattichaura Ghat it is highly improbable that they could have seen and heard the things in the vivid terms in which they described them. Some of them managed to get so near Tatya Tope as to have heard the talk between him and his colleagues. This is incredible.

(iii) The eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses to the happenings at the Ghat and in Bibighar are witnesses of a miscellaneous kind and many of them are illiterate villagers, some of them being merely youngsters of 20—25 years. There must have been numerous respectable people present at least at the Ghat and it should not have been difficult to produce some of them to give a connected idea of the entire proceedings. Few of such witnesses were produced.

(iv) None of these witnesses was cross-examined. In the case of some witnesses, certain contradictory statements, or patently untrue statements, were put to them in the form of leading questions by the officer recording the evidence, and whatever they stated in making the position clear from their point of view was recorded. No attempt was made to get at the bottom of the affair or at the truth by asking searching questions or making some sort of cross-examination.

(v) Not unoften, a volley of questions, five or six in number, were put to a witness at one and the same time in a most haphazard manner. The general procedure is to put one question at a time—after it has been answered, other questions, one by one, are to be put. Yet the witnesses seemed to catch all the several and divergent questions put simultaneously and answer them almost seriatim. This is surprising when it is remembered that many of these witnesses were illiterate villagers or city people of a miscellaneous type who could not be expected to comprehend all this. And yet they did. Here comes the possibility of their having been tutored.

(vi) In analysing the evidence, Colonel Williams has made adverse comments upon the veracity of the witnesses.

(vii) Also in the covering note by Colonel Williams grave doubts have been expressed regarding the want of evidence about the Ghat and Bibighar. It has been observed by him that it was a pity that proper evidence, which must have existed with respectable city people, was not there.

(viii) Witnesses had their necks in the neck. Almost all of them had to be careful to see that they did not directly or indirectly implicate themselves or were supposed to have implicated themselves. Each must have entertained the fear that after giving the evidence he might himself be hauled up for some act of commission or omission, particularly of omitting to report to the authorities the names of the culprits, and so on.

(ix) The recording of evidence was more in the nature of an 'apology' for an enquiry, rather than a proper and judicious investigation carried out in a regular manner. The whole thing has the colour of having been done in a routine fashion to fulfil an order, rather than an attempt to arrive at the truth.

(x) From the evidence recorded, it is possible to reconstruct several kinds of versions of the events. And in fact Sir George Trevelyan and others have made out graphic and horrid accounts of the happenings by taking one thing from one witness and another thing from a second witness, and so on.

The *Diary* of Azimullah Khan also makes mention of Bibighar. It states that the prisoners at Bibighar, on hearing the news of the success of the British at every place, used to taunt the sepoys of the guard. Complaints about this used to be brought to Nana Saheb, but he gave no attention to it. One day, a complaint was brought that one of the male prisoners had threatened a Muslim sepoy that he would have pig's flesh thrust into his mouth. This was greatly resented by Nana Saheb who then gave liberty to the sepoys to do as they liked, whereupon the prisoners, including the women and children, were taken to a small distance from Bibighar and there all of them were killed. But the genuineness of this *Diary*, that is to say whether it was written by Azimullah Khan himself or whether it is a faked document written by someone afterwards with an ulterior motive, has not yet been established.

C. HOW THE DESTRUCTION WAS CARRIED OUT

The Kanpur Gazetteer refers to this subject in a few words. It says that on the evening of July 15, 1857, "the helpless captives in the Bibighar were being foully murdered at the Nana's order", and goes on to add that "this was the final act of the Maratha's rule, for the receipt of the news from Aoung and the arrival of Bala Rao, severely wounded, threw everything into confusion at Kanpur". Mr. Sherer's Account is more detailed and may first be quoted as representing the British official version :

"But we have now to narrate the last scene in the Nana's rule at Kanpur.

"The battle of Aoung was fought early in the afternoon of the 15th (July) and the Pandoo Nadee was forced, to the best of my recollection, by about 11 o'clock the same day. There was, therefore, ample time for the news of the repulse and the steady advance of the British troops to have reached Kanpur early in the afternoon. There is every reason, therefore, to suppose that the fate of the unhappy captives was immediately made the subject of discussion. The decision arrived at is now known and execrated throughout the civilized world. It was decided that the captives should be put to death. The order was carried into execution about sundown. There were four gentlemen, three of them of the Fatehgarh party, who by some mischance, or for some other special reason, had been reserved from the fate which had already fallen upon their male companions. These were first taken out of the Bibighar and murdered on the high road. Then the general massacre commenced. It seems probable that vollies were first fired into the doors and windows, and then that executioners were sent in to do the rest with swords. If the work was anything like completed, it must have taken a considerable time. At length the doors were closed, and night fell upon what had happened."

The *Account* goes on to add : "Early next morning, orders were given for the Bibighar to be cleared. There must have been near upon 200 corpses. So many, I do not think, could have been thrown into the well. It seems probable that a portion were dragged down to the Ganga. Considering the smallness of the house and the crowded condition of the captives, it is next to impossible that all can have been slaughtered the previous night. It is exercising therefore no morbid imagination and pandering to no prurient curiosity to say that I hold no doubt some of the living met a more terrible death than assassination, even by being plunged with their dead companions into the tainted waters of the well."

Mr. Sherer had himself been to Bibighar and to the well on July 18, and described what he saw in the following words : "And then broke upon our sight that dreadful spectacle, over the very idea of which there are still broken spirits and widowed hearts mourning terror-stricken in distant England. I have no more details to add to what is already too well known and must dismiss the sad subject with one or two brief remarks. The stories of children found suspended on the trees and of mutilated dead bodies lying in the enclosure are entirely fabrications. There were no dead bodies, except in the well. The well was narrow and deep, and on looking down you could only see a tangled mass of human limbs entirely without clothing. To the best of my belief there was not

a word written on the walls. I searched myself, and I know that others did so too, but without discovering any intelligible marks."

In his *Havelock's March on Kanpur** also Sherer has made a reference to this subject. General Havelock's force entered Kanpur on July 17 and the next day Sherer, with a trooper by name Bews, went to see the Bibighar. One or two Britishers had been there earlier, but the place had not been changed so that Sherer found it in the same condition in which it was left by the mutineers. What Sherer saw is best described in his own words : "The whole story was so unspeakably horrible that it would be quite wrong in any sort of way to increase the distressing circumstances which really existed. And I may say once for all that the accounts were exaggerated. The attack had evidently been made from the front entrance, and there is reason to suppose that it commenced by muskets being pushed through the venetians, and discharged. There had been a rush across the court to the opposite side, and a mass of human beings were collected in the arched chamber facing the entrance. And thither, doubtless, they were pursued by the assassins with swords for the whole of the pavement was thickly caked with blood. Surely this is enough, without saying 'the clotted gore lay ankle-deep', which, besides being most distressing, is absolutely incorrect. Then, as to what was lying about, both of us thought it wonderful that the small litter we saw could be the traces of the numbers who had been shut up there. There is no question in my mind that when the bodies were taken away the place had been tidied a little and painful objects had been removed. There were certainly a few odds and ends of clothing, some locks of hair, some little shoes, straw hats, and so on. Of mutilation, in that house at least, there were no signs, nor at that time was there any writing on the walls. It is well-known that there were one or two books, and in them some notes which have long since been communicated to the public."

That the unfortunate prisoners at Bibighar were killed on the evening of July 15, is an established fact. It is also established that the dead bodies or most of them were thrown into the nearby well on the morning of July 16. But to these facts of history have been added, by some of the authors, horrifying details as to the manner in which the killing was done.

It must be admitted, however, in fairness to those authors that their accounts, quite apart from the question of their accuracy, were not tainted with motives of any evil design—they described what they, from the material before them, honestly believed to have occurred. The horror arises from the rhetoric and the style of the particular author rather than from his desire to paint an uglier picture than what he saw in his mind's eye. It would be unfair, for instance, to suggest that Sir George Trevelyan writing in his *Cawnpore* was actuated by any consideration other than the desire to record conclusions honestly deduced from the available data. All that can be said is that the appraisal of evidence on any given issue must largely remain a matter of honest difference of opinion. And this is also true when questions of interpretation of a series of circumstances are involved—circumstances which have not been described by direct eyewitnesses of infallible judgment and unquestionable integrity.

However, whether the foul deed was attended by circumstances of avoidable cruelty or otherwise, is not very material to the point

*The description given earlier is from the Report, dated January 15, 1859, which Mr. Sherer (as Magistrate of Kanpur) made to the Commissioner, Allahabad Division (Mr. Thornhill) and which the latter sent to the Local Government with his covering letter of April 28, 1859. The Report is entitled *Some Accounts of the Mutiny and subsequent events at Kanpur*. It will be found in the Government publication, *Mutiny Narratives*, N. W. Provinces.

that the killing of helpless women and children in cold blood must, at all times and in all climes, be regarded as a matter of profound sorrow and shame.

But without minimizing the barbarity which must inevitably be involved in any wholesale destruction of some two hundred lives of women and tender children it is necessary to state certain facts in the interests of the honour equally of Indians as of Englishmen :

(I) No dishonour or indignity was done to the female prisoners at any time during their imprisonment (Sherer's *Account*, also paragraph 7 of Mr. Thornhill's letter to Government, dated April 28, 1859).

(II) None of the prisoners were mutilated—Mr. Sherer has candidly admitted in his *Account* that with regard to this "there appears to have been a great deal of intentional prevarication". Writing again in his *Havelock's March on Kanpur* he states in chapter VII that he had all along supported the idea that there was no mutilation of the prisoners, men or women, before death. He had found no proof of it. He adds that it was possible that some mutilation after death may have taken place and that was with a view to get possession of the jewellery worn by lady prisoners. For instance, he says that, in one of his visits to the place, he had found a hand under a bush which appeared to be of a female. As to this, Sherer came to the conclusion that it had probably been severed for its ring and that this had been done by the sweeper.

(III) There was also no case of torture (Sherer's *Account*).

(IV) The professional sepoys had refused to shoot the women and the children.

(V) The prisoners, beyond the fact of their being kept in confinement, were not treated with indignity, nor with greater hardship than prisoners of any class or race under Indian Military rule then obtaining (*Review of Evidence*). Clothes were provided to them and, for food, they regularly received *chapaties* and *dal*—these were prepared by especially-appointed cooks. Milk was also sometimes given to the children. Afterwards, some meat was allowed in lieu of *dal* at the request of the prisoners who had complained that they were not accustomed to eating *dal*. A lady of Nana Saheb's household, Husaini Khanum, popularly known as the Begum, looked to the wants of the prisoners.

(VI) The story that some of the female prisoners used to be taken to Nana Saheb's stable for the purpose of grinding gram, was probably untrue. It was put to several witnesses during Mr. Williams' enquiry and was denied by them.* It was only John Fitchett who had deposed that every day two ladies, whether young or old, were by turns taken out of Bibighar for the purpose of grinding gram for three or four hours. When asked how he knew that they went to grind gram he said that he had heard the ladies say so, and that they often brought back handfuls of ground gram which they gave to the children. He added that they were taken by the Begum to the Nana's stable in the next compound. But the denial of this story by the other witnesses casts serious doubts on the veracity of John Fitchett regarding this part of his evidence.

(VII) The ladies were not molested either by the soldiers on guard-duty or by any other soldiers or by anyone else.†

The lesson

The taking of life is a terrible business, and the horror is not diminished by the means employed. The executioner's axe, or the guillotine, the gallows or the scaffold, the sword or the dagger, the bayonet or the club,

*See for instance the evidence of William Clark (deposition no. 2) and of Thomas DeCruze (deposition no. 3).
†*Ibid.*

the gun or the mouth of a cannon and the electric chair must all be horrifying apparatus when used in destroying life, as much as the poison or the hands that strangulate. And to these must now be added the nuclear weapons and the poison gas. Some killings are permissible, namely those on the battle-field, the execution by process of law, the killing of a person in self-defence (under certain circumstances only, e.g. when the killer's life is threatened and in certain other circumstances). Then there are killings which society or the law does not condone. But while all killings, permissible or not, are horrible, the killing in cold blood is horrible still and so is the destruction of helpless women and children.

Viewed in this light, the massacre of the women and the children at Bibighar must be unequivocally condemned at all times and in all circumstances, regardless of the fact that the persons killed belonged to a race or community which had either previously or afterwards indulged in massacres more heart-rending or of greater cruelty.

But beyond the fact that the ladies and the children were killed, and the shame and ignominy attaching to the misdeed, no other accusations can be made, or have been proved, against those who had a hand in getting the massacre done or against those who actually did it. It does not add to, or lessen, the depth of tragedy if the victims were killed by bullets or by swords, or whether five men or seven killed all the victims, or whether the persons who actually killed them were *jallads* or guards or villains of this kind or that; anyone who committed such an act must be assigned to the sub-human category.

At the same time, it is clear, read we may the evidence of whatever witnesses we like, that no more cruelty was employed than was necessary for making life extinct, that there had been no torture of any kind, nor any disgrace to womanly honour.

It must also be stated that the soldiers maintained the honour of their profession by not shooting at the women and the children.

The manner in which the corpses were disposed of the next morning, that is, by throwing them in a well, is also immaterial to the abhorrence of the actual slaughter. For instance, so long as no proper burial was provided, it would have mattered little if the bodies had been buried in a mass grave or thrown into the river or burnt.

The atrocities committed by both sides can, if desired, be read in detail in other works. But the only purpose now served by the record of these happenings is to put mankind on its guard against the possibility of their repetition in future struggles.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SATTICHAURA AND BIBIGHAR

A. NANA SAHEB NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE.

B. POINTS CONCERNING BIBIGHAR.

C. POINTS CONCERNING SATTICHAURA.

D. POINTS COMMON TO BOTH.

E. THEN WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY ?

F. QUESTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

> *"Friends, Countrymen, Romans,*
> *Lend me your ears ;*
> *I come not to praise Caesar*
> *But to bury him."*
>
> —Mark Antony in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

A. NANA SAHEB NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE

British writers, . ith one or two exceptions, have unequivocally put on Nana Saheb the responsibility for the happenings at the Sattichaura Ghat and later at Bibighar. In doing so they appear to have been largely influenced by sentiment. Their approach has not been entirely impersonal. This is not surprising because it must be admitted as a historical fact that Englishmen lost their lives at the Sattichaura Ghat in the most tragic circumstances and that later at Bibighar helpless women and children were brutally done to death. In the face of such deep tragedy it is but natural to be swayed by emotion, particularly when the writers were recording their accounts at the time the incidents were still fresh in living memory.

We are not concerned here with the happenings at the two places—these have already been described in earlier chapters. The question is whether Nana Saheb was in fact responsible for them. As already stated, most of the British writers have not cared to consider this point as a question—they appear to have assumed that Nana Saheb, and he alone, was the sole perpetrator of these cruel and shameful brutalities. But

*Some Indian writers too have, in varying degrees, cast the blame on Nana Saheb, e.g. Dr. Sen. The late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his Foreword to Dr. Sen's book has also held Nana Saheb responsible for Bibighar. The invalidity of these views has been discussed in the last section of this chapter.

history must put a question mark against such an assumption which has been asserted as an established fact by a long line of able writers.

It is to be noted in the first place that the English were unable to capture the real Nana though more than one person was arrested on the ground of mistaken identity, only to be released later. In spite of the proclaimed reward of one lakh of rupees for his arrest, he could not be caught. There are thus no witnesses examined in open court about the part of Nana Saheb in these happenings—witnesses who could have been properly cross-examined. It is to be remembered here that the testimony of a witness who has not been cross-examined on behalf of the defence is of little value both under codified law and under the rules of natural justice. An honest witness may actually be describing what he heard from others as if he actually saw the event himself. Unless, therefore, his misapprehension is cleared through cross-examination his evidence would convey the erroneous impression of being the testimony of an eye-witness—and there is all the difference between the evidence of an eye-witness and hearsay evidence. According to law, hearsay evidence is inadmissible. Therefore, in the absence of a regular trial it would be unfair to cast blame in a one-sided manner, so to say, on a person who had no opportunity to defend himself. In such circumstances, history would caution a writer to be careful in recording an adverse verdict, particularly when such a verdict would impugn the national character of a great people with a just pride in their traditions and civilization.

Viewed in this light it would appear that British writers have not been fair to Nana Saheb directly and to Indian nationhood indirectly. They have chosen to call him by all sorts of names and have used unbecoming adjectives to describe his character. They have done this partly in anger, partly in disdain, but no history would be worth its name if written by a person in such a state of mind.

With regard to Nana Saheb's responsibility, there are certain points and considerations which apply separately to :

(*a*) Bibighar ;
(*b*) Sattichaura Ghat ; } and, in addition, there are certain
(*c*) points common to both.

These have been dealt with under separate headings in the order mentioned.

B. POINTS CONCERNING BIBIGHAR.

The theory which has, generally speaking, held the field is that it was Nana Saheb who ordered that the prisoners be killed. This theory has been questioned by Dr. Sen—page 159 of his *Eighteen Fifty-seven*. He holds that while Nana Saheb "was legally and morally responsible for the lives of his prisoners and the massacre was committed in his name", there is no adequate evidence to establish that the order for the killing had actually been given by him. In this connexion Dr. Sen refers to the following circumstances :

(1) The question is not yet settled beyond doubt as to whether the massacre at Bibighar was committed *before* Nana Saheb had left for Bithoor or *after*. Dr. Sen says that "it is impossible to settle this point at this distance of time unless some new evidence comes to light".

(2) Nana Saheb had himself asserted that he had nothing to do with the murder of women and children. These are his words :

"At Kanpur the soldiers disobeyed my orders and began killing the English women and the ryots. All I could save by any means I did save and, when they left the entrenchment,

provided boats in which I sent them down to Allahabad. Your sepoys then attacked them. By means of entreaties I restrained my soldiers and saved the lives of 200 English women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoys and *budmashes* at the time that my soldiers fled Kanpur and my brother* was wounded. After this I heard of the *Ishtaharnama* that had been published by you and prepared to fight and up to this time I have been fighting with (against) you and while I live will fight "—*vide* Nana Saheb's *Ishtaharnama* of April 1859, described in Chapter 42, Section C.

(3) Kusma Bai, daughter of Peshwa Baji Rao (and sister to Nana Saheb by adoption), believed her brother to be innocent. She was about ten years of age at the time of the 'Mutiny'. In her old age, she paid a visit to Poona and was there interviewed by Sri V. K. Rajwade and Sri Pandoba Patwardhan. She then said that Nana Saheb had tried his best to restrain the rebel troops; that he had nothing to do with the massacre. This evidence could not, of course, be conclusive, because it raises the question as to how much a girl of ten years was likely to know about the policies of her brother's court. Moreover, she was living at the late Peshwa's palace at Bithoor while Nana Saheb's headquarters then were at Kanpur.

(4) Dr. Sen asserts, on the point of Nana Saheb's alleged guilt, that "on such evidence as was tendered before Colonel Williams, no criminal court could convict the most notorious malefactor". He, however, adds these words of caution: "Absence of reliable evidence, however, does not necessarily connote absence of guilt".

The above circumstances point to Nana Saheb's innocence in the Bibighar affair. There are three possibilities:

(*a*) either that Nana Saheb was not present at Kanpur at the date and the hour of massacre;

(*b*) or that, if he was present, he did not himself order the massacre;

(*c*) or that the decision to finish the prisoners was taken at a council of prominent persons presided over by Nana Saheb, at which the latter was overruled.

The last two possibilities have been dealt with in the preceding chapter on Bibighar. As regards the first possibility, it is established that the massacre was carried out late in the afternoon of July 15 and was finished when it became dark. Early the next morning the dead bodies were thrown into the well. In considering the question of Nana Saheb's presence at Kanpur on this day the chronology of events which took place on the days preceding and following this date may first be stated—these have been taken from Sherer's *Account*:

Chronology of Events

July 6, 1857 .. British Force under General Havelock left Allahabad in the afternoon. (Force consisted of about 1,200 Europeans, 150 Sikhs and 20 or 25 Volunteer Cavalry). A few days before that, Major Renaud had started from Allahabad for Kanpur with 400 Europeans and about 400 Sikhs.

July 7 . A division under Brigadier Jwala Prasad was sent to check the advance of the British; in three days it reached Fatehpur where a battle was fought on the 12th.

*Bala Saheb or Bala Rao.

July 11 .. The British Force reached Khaga in the Fatehpur district. General Havelock had heard that the Rebel Force was advancing on Fatehpur, so on the mid-night of this date he marched on to catch Major Renaud who was then only a short distance ahead. The two Forces were amalgamated in the middle of the night and both of them then marched together.

July 12 .. In the morning at about 7 o' clock the combined Force reached Belanda, about four miles on the Allahabad side of Fatehpur.

The Rebel Force also advanced down the road and in the morning the battle of Fatehpur was fought. The Rebel Force was defeated and turned towards Fatehpur. The British Force advanced about a mile and a half on the Kanpur side of Fatehpur and there under the trees waited for their camp to come up from Belanda.

Fatehpur was given to plunder by the British troops.

July 13 .. The British Force marched from Fatehpur in the morning, but the Sikhs were left behind to set the town on fire in several places all at once.

July 14 .. The British Force encamped near the village of Kallianpur.

July 15 .. The British Force marched on towards Aoung in the morning. This village is on the Fatehpur side of the Pandu river.

The Rebel Force had come up again and was in the occupation of the village. The battle of Aoung was fought in which the Rebel Force again lost the day. Village Aoung (on the Kanpur side of Fatehpur), to which the Rebel Force had retreated was also taken by General Havelock. Thereafter, the British Force continued to push on and occupied the opposite bank (the one towards Kanpur) of the Pandu river in order to prevent the bridge being damaged by the Rebel Army. The British troops remained on the bank for the night of the 15th. In this battle Bala Rao, Nana Saheb's brother, was severely wounded.

IN THE EVENING OF THIS DAY THE TRAGEDY OF BIBIGHAR TOOK PLACE.

July 16 .. Early in the morning, the dead bodies were taken out of the building and thrown into the well.

By *sun-rise*, the British Force was on the march again and passed through Sirsaul.

By *noon*, they reached the village of Ahirwan and rested for a couple of hours. Then at 2.30 p. m. they started for the last battle. The battle took place between Ahirwan and the city of Kanpur and the Rebel Force was again defeated.

The day was, however, not won by the British, because Nana Saheb himself had taken up a fresh position on the road leading to Kanpur Cantonment, where he had received reinforcements from the city. This engagement was also not successful and the Rebel Army made a retreat

July 17 .. In the *morning*, the Powder Magazine at Kanpur was blown up by the Rebel Force.

The British army was encamped at the Parade Ground.

In the *evening*, Nana Saheb left *Bithoor*. "To the best of my information, he left Bithoor on the evening of the 17th"—Sherer's *Account*.

July 18 .. In the morning the British troops were ordered to march by the Grand Trunk Road to the Mission premises—this protected the station in the direction of Bithoor ; it also preserved the soldiers from the temptations of liquor as well as from any desire to take vengeance into their own hands.

The same day Mr. J. B. Sherer, with the permission of General Havelock, rode with two cavalry-men into the city. He had the re-establishment of British power proclaimed in several places. At the Kotwali he met almost the whole mercantile population who, Sherer says, "professed (I cannot say with what sincerity) the greatest delight at our return". One or two half-caste Christians who were concealed in remote lanes and alleys were also liberated.

Mr. Sherer then proceeded to Noor Mohammad's Hotel which had been occupied by Nana Saheb. "It was," says Sherer, "found just as the Nana had left it. He slept on one side, and on the opposite had rooms for *pooja* and cooking, keeping two large centre apartments for durbar purposes."

July 19 .. Major Stevenson of the Madras Fusiliers went to Bithoor with a party of soldiers. The place was found deserted and was occupied without the least resistance. Thirteen guns were taken over besides a great deal of valuable property. The Nana's palace was also destroyed.

It will be seen that the final battle with General Havelock's Force was fought on the evening of July 16 on the road leading to Kanpur Cantonment, and that Nana Saheb was present in the action. The battle was lost and Nana Saheb had to flee. He is said to have crossed the Ganga at Bithoor (for proceeding to Lucknow) on the night between July 17 and 18 with his entire family and trusted servants. If it be true that Nana Saheb was present at the battle and if he left Bithoor at the time above stated then his presence at Kanpur on the 15th cannot be seriously questioned except on the possibility that he was then not at Kanpur but had gone to Bithoor (which by the road then existing was 12 miles from Kanpur) and where his entire household was living. This is not altogether an improbability for after the loss of the battle at Fatehpur on July 12 (news about which would have reached Kanpur the next day), Nana Saheb might have thought of the safety of his family and the arrangements to be made for evacuating them from Bithoor in the event of his final defeat.

On this important question about the possibility of Nana Saheb being away from Kanpur on the day of the Bibighar slaughter something more remains to be said.

In the course of the collection of material for the present book the author made efforts to find out whether any data bearing on this possible *alibi* could be found. While nothing conclusive could be found in the works of contemporary authors, some light on the point was thrown from quite an unexpected source ; this was Munshi Brij Narain of village Ramel near Bithoor. M. Brij Narain has his ancestral house here. He was for many years supervisor kanungo at Bithoor and ultimately retired in 1947 after 33 years of service. His age is near about 80 years. His great grand-father, Munshi Balchand, was for sometime in the service of Maharaja Baji Rao, and, after the latter's death, was employed as Diwan of the Peshwa's Subedar.

The author went to see this old gentleman at Ramel in June 1958, in order to find out whether he had any papers bearing on 1857. M. Brij Narain though old in years had still a sharp memory and said that although he had no papers he had heard certain accounts from his father, Munshi Jang Bahadur, who too had served as Kanungo under the

British Government. He had been born on May 10, 1857, the date on which the "Mutiny" had started and was, for that reason, given the name of Jang Bahadur.

The author had no idea that M. Brij Narain would be able to throw any light on the question of this *alibi* and consequently did not ask him anything about it. In the course of the conversation M. Brij Narain, however, spoke of the bravery of Bala Saheb saying that there was no one to match Bala Saheb in the art of war-fare and in personal bravery. He was wounded in the right shoulder in the battle of Ahirwan as a result of which he fell from his horse and was brought to Kanpur. He added that Bala Saheb was wounded by the shot of one of his own soldiers, who treacherously took aim at him and wounded him. M. Brij Narain went on to say, of his own accord, that when the news about the treacherous attack on Bala Saheb reached Nana Saheb at *Bithoor*, then he (Nana Saheb) said in despair that they had now no chance of success and soon thereafter left Bithoor with the members of his family in which the wounded Bala Saheb was also included.

The author was much surprised to hear this from M. Brij Narain because this account does support the possibility of the *alibi*. The battle of Ahirwan was fought and lost on July 16 in the afternoon when according to this version, Nana Saheb was at *Bithoor*. The tragedy of Bibighar took place on the evening of the previous day and as Nana Saheb was at Bithoor on the 16th it is highly improbable that he was at Kanpur on that fateful evening. In order that there may be left no doubt, so far as M. Brij Narain was concerned, the author again put to him the definite question whether at that time Nana Saheb was at Bithoor and his reply was definitely in the affirmative. In saying so (according to what he had heard from his father and grand-father), the Kanungo Saheb was not aware that this very question had been raised by Dr. Sen—what he said was a sort of non-controversial statement, but his demeanour was positive, even assertive.

The account of M. Brij Narain is, of course, a hearsay statement, but on a point of historical controversy it is not easy to find direct and conclusive evidence for one version or the other. But the circumstances in which M. Brij Narain made the statement lends support to the theory of *alibi*. In making his statement M. Brij Narain did not connect it, either directly or indirectly, with the Bibighar tragedy. He gave his account quite independently of the latter and this circumstance is important. Another relevant point is that M. Brij Narain was not also aware of the contents of Nana Saheb's *Ishtaharnama* in which the latter had disclaimed his responsibility for Bibighar.

On this issue of *alibi*, the evidence in favour of Nana Saheb, though mostly circumstantial, is substantial, particularly when regard is had to his own declaration of his innocence. And he thus stands practically cleared of any direct hand in the crime. Similar would be the result if future researches establish that Nana Saheb and his family evacuated Bithoor on a date at which, allowing for the arrangements to be made for evacuating the big family, he could not have been present at Kanpur on the fateful day.

C POINTS CONCERNING SATTICHAURA GHAT

In the case of Bibighar certain motives have been ascribed (for whatever they may be worth) for the destruction of the prisoners. For the happenings at the Sattichaura Ghat, however, so far as Nana Saheb is concerned, he could have no motive for luring the inmates of the entrenchment to the Ganga and getting them massacred there. For one

thing, the besieged had been reduced to such a state of misery that they could not have held longer than a day or two. The hopeless condition of the garrison was known to Nana Saheb from the account of the prisoners* taken now and then during the siege. In these circumstances Nana Saheb and the other leaders of the revolt would have entertained no doubt that the garrison would fall any day. What then was the need to lay a stratagem or to think of treachery. No explanation for this is forthcoming. In this connexion the following observations of Dr. Sen speak for themselves :

"The boats were collected and fitted on very short notice. They did not belong to the boatmen, but to banias of Maheshwari and Agarwal sections. The proprietors were duly compensated for their loss. On the evening of the 26th when the Committee of Inspection went to see them, many of the boats still lacked their bamboo platforms and roofs of straw. But thousands of labourers worked all night to remove these deficiencies. If Nana meditated treachery from the first, one wonders why so much money and labour were wasted on the boats, for once out of the entrenchment, the English would be as helpless in the midst of a hostile crowd on land as they were on the river. They had their arms, and it could not be expected that they would let their women and children be slaughtered without a desperate fight." Dr. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-seven*, page 151.

It would be hazardous, from the point of view of ascertaining the truth, to place implicit reliance on the official narrative of the happening as recorded in Sherer's *Account*, because of certain patent improbabilities in it. For instance, Sherer has stated : "Meantime at the Kanpur Ghat, after the partial escape of the two boats, the massacre continued. Musketry was kept up from behind the neighbouring garden walls, and sawars made attacks on the helpless crowd by riding in amongst them, and slashing in all directions with their tulwars." Now, if the sawars were "riding in amongst" the evacuees and using their tulwars on them, surely they were as much liable to be hit by the fire of the musketry from the shore as their victims. It is impossible to believe that any sawar would have exposed himself to such a risk. Either there was no firing from behind the garden walls on the bank when the sawars were doing their so-called job or the sawars were not doing so when the musketry was firing. Both could not synchronize, and yet Sherer would ask us to believe that this was so. If the details of the happening which are based on the evidence of so-called eye-witnesses are to be read with caution, there is greater reason to be cautious in reading averments about Nana Saheb's responsibility—averments which are based on conjecture and not on any direct evidence at all.

Far from being cruel-hearted Nana Saheb was a noble soul. Giving evidence in the enquiry conducted under the direction of Colonel Williams, Parma Nand, Jamadar in the employ of General Wheeler, said, "the Nana sent some food for the garrison"† after General Wheeler had surrendered and the fighting over the entrenchment had ceased. Of course, the sending of food was an ordinary act of good behaviour, but some of the British writers would wish it to be believed that Nana Saheb was virtueless through and through. The above is one of the many instances, though not of much significance by itself, of Nana Saheb's humanity and gentlemanliness. The accusation about Nana Saheb's hand in Sattichaura Ghat and in Bibighar would be incompatible

*These were mostly the spies which General Wheeler had sent out to spread dissension amongst the sepoys, particularly between Muslims and Hindus.

†Page 74 of "Evidence".

with the gentle character which Nana Saheb is shown to possess.

In Lt. Colonel Williams' Memorandum it is stated :

"A man of great influence in the city and a Government official, has related a circumstance that is strange, if true ; viz., that whilst the massacre was being carried on at the Ghat, a trooper of the 2nd Cavalry, reported to the Nana, then at Savada House, that his enemies, their wives and children were exterminated. Some one present remarked, 'Yes, it was true, for an infant of a month old was seen floating down the stream'. On hearing which, the Nana replied, that 'for the destruction of women and children, there was no necessity', and directed the sawar to return with an order to stay their slaughter."

Colonel Williams has qualified the above incident with a doubt about its truthfulness, but, on looking into the evidence recorded under his own directions, it will be found that the incident was correct not only as regards the stoppage of the destruction of women and children, but also as regards the destruction of all the evacuees. Here is what Mrs. Eliza Bradshaw and Mrs. Elizabeth Sett, who were amongst the evacuees (of the entrenchment) taken to the Ghat, and both of whom escaped into the city unhurt after the remaining women and children and some men had been taken away to the Savada House :

"Suddenly shouts were heard that the Nana had ordered the *firing to cease*, the sepoys and sawars were not to kill any more women and children, there were no European men left alive at the Ghat. We hid behind some logs of wood. The sawars and sepoys collected the ladies and children : they were all seated on the ground. Bhishties were sent for to give them water, they remained there about half an hour, and then were taken away by the sawars and sepoys, we believe, to the Savada House. No, there were no indignities offered to the ladies. Their clothes were not taken away ; some of the ladies had their ear-rings torn out of their ears, but that was whilst in the water. After they were brought to the bank no one but the guards were allowed to go near them. We heard that it was the Nana's order that women and children were to be given up."

Now, if Nana Saheb had laid a plot for the massacre of the evacuees at the Ghat, how is his action in ordering the stoppage of the killing, to be explained. Was it that, all of a sudden, Nana Saheb was filled with compassion for the ladies and the children ? But most of the British writers have accused him of being altogether devoid of the affections of the heart. The truth is that it is impossible to reconcile the existence of a previous plot with the subsequent stoppage of the killing on the orders of Nana Saheb. That Nana Saheb ordered the stoppage of the slaughter is an established fact based on definite evidence of eye-witnesses, but the point about pre-planned massacre is based only on conjecture. Therefore, according to the rules of logic and the law of evidence the theory of pre-planned plot on the part of Nana Saheb must be rejected.

It will also be seen from the evidence :

(i) that water was provided to the rescued persons by bhishties who had been specially called for the purpose ;

(ii) that no indignity was done to the ladies ;

(iii) that the orders of Nana Saheb were that the ladies were not to be touched ; actually no one except the guards were allowed to go near them ;

(iv) that Nana Saheb's further orders were that "all women and children were to be given up", which apparently means

that the sawars, who had taken away some of the ladies, were to surrender them.

All these things point to the conclusion that the allegation about the hatching of a trap to finish the evacuees on the bank of the Ganga is untenable.

The sepoys were quite courteous to the evacuees before the embarkation was completed—this has been averred by Captain Mowbray Thomson in *The Story of Cawnpore.* Thomson was one of the evacuees of the entrenchment who finally escaped and who in 1859 published a detailed narrative in London.

In their depositions* Eliza Bradshaw and Elizabeth Sett, who were amongst the evacuees, have stated that most of the ladies were taken to the Ghat on hackeries. "We were about the centre with the drummers and their families. The sawars and sepoys were on our right and left. No, they said nothing to us ; they did not abuse us."

If Nana Saheb and his advisers had evil designs they must surely have been communicated to the sepoys who accompanied the unfortunate evacuees to the Ghat. And in that event the sepoys, as a body, could not have been able to hide their inner feelings and would not have shown courtesy and decorum to their impending victims. It is very difficult for a *mass* of people to put up a show of friendliness when their inner purpose is cruelty—individuals may, of course, be able to feign such appearances, but not a mass of people particularly with the temper which the mutinous sepoys had at that time.

In the *Kanpur Narrative* has been given a plan showing the position of the Sattichaura Ghat and the disposition of the boats prepared for the reception of the evacuees. The plan also shows the places where guns and also a large number of sepoys and sawars are said to have been concealed. On the strength of this plan it has been argued that treachery had been pre-arranged. A copy of the plan appears on the next page.

An examination of this plan brings out certain improbabilities and throws doubt on the theory of the existence of a studied design to finish the evacuees on their embarkation into the boats :

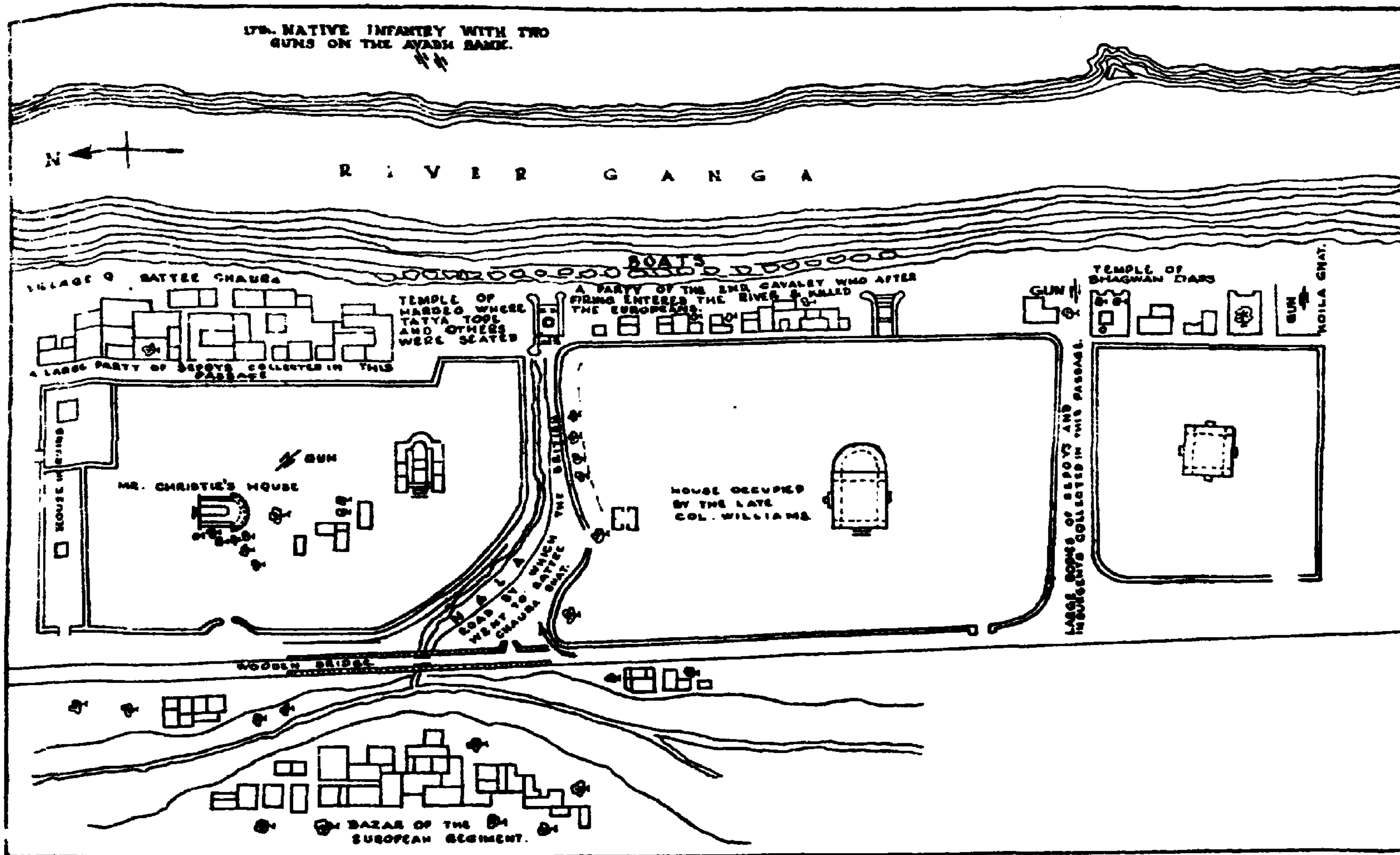
(i) The plan shows the situation of the temple of Hardeva where Tatya Tope and others are said to have been seated. Towards the north-west side of the plan, near Mr. Christie's house, is shown the position of one of the guns. Now, shells fired from this gun in the direction of the boats would have had to travel over the heads of Tatya Tope and others and would have exposed them to great risk. Either the gun was not at the spot where it has been shown or Tatya Tope and others were not seated at the place indicated.

(ii) Again, shells from the two guns shown on the opposite bank of the Ganga, if they could destroy the boats and the Europeans on the Kanpur side of the river, could also fall on Tatya Tope and his party who were in the direct firing range. Such a state of affairs would not have been allowed in any planned offensive.

(iii) The soldiers amongst the evacuees were armed with loaded muskets and Tatya Tope and his party, sitting on the chabutra, were easy targets for them. Would Tatya Tope and his men take such an entirely unnecessary risk ?

(iv) The evidence recorded does not bring out that Tatya Tope and the others with him seated on the chabutra were armed with muskets. If there was pre-arranged treachery on their part, it is

*Deposition no. 6.



SATTEE CHAURA GHAT, KANPUR.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR EMBARKATION

inconceivable that they should be leisurely sitting on the chabutra and offering themselves as easy targets of the rifles of the evacuee soldiers, instead of riding on horse-back and stationing themselves at a place of comparative safety.

(v) The placing of guns and stationing of sepoys at and around the Ghat would have been no more than the taking of ordinary precaution in a situation such as then existed. It does not necessarily support the theory of a premeditated plan.

The evidence which has been cited in support of a pre-arranged plan may now be examined. There is the deposition of Kalka Prasad* who was employed as munshi of Mr. Thomas Greenway, a wealthy merchant of Kanpur. He stated that he had "*heard* that the Nana's intention was to massacre the Europeans *as soon as they left the entrenchment*". He added that he had informed his master about this when he visited him in the entrenchment on the 26th.

"*Question* : How and when did you hear of the Nana's intended treachery ?

Answer : Every day, after I was taken prisoner and released by Brigadier Jwala Prasad, he ordered me to be in attendance daily ; he used to question me about my master's money. On the 25th June about 4.00 p.m., Jwala Prasad and Azimullah returned from the entrenchment. I was present at Shah Ali Kotwal's, who resided in the Nana's tent verandah. I overheard Jwala Prasad, Azimullah, Shah Ali, Ahmad Ali Vakil, and another thanah jemadar, whose name I do not recollect, talking amongst themselves, saying that this was a good opportunity of *getting rid of the Europeans.*"

At first the witness had stated that he had *heard* that the intention was that the Europeans be murdered "as soon as they left the entrenchment". Later, he stated that he had heard Brigadier Jwala Prasad and others saying that "this was a good opportunity of getting rid of the Europeans". There is thus an inconsistency in the two versions he had heard. Apparently, the witness, if he was stating the truth, had not clearly heard what was said and supplied the missing links from his own imagination. He heard something about getting rid of Europeans, and this could have meant "getting rid" of them *by sending them to Allahabad.*

Taken as a whole, his evidence does not make out a case for a pre-meditated plan, although some British writers have assumed that the evidence does indicate treachery. Such an assumption would merely be a rash conclusion and not a thought-out proposition.

Reference to the alleged pre-arranged plan has also been made in the *Diary* of Nanak Chand. The following is an extract from the entry in it against June 26 :

"My servant, Sham Singh, brought me a letter today. I learnt therefrom that the boats have been constructed with the greatest expedition ; . . . at the same time an order was addressed to Hulas Singh, Kotwal, to explain to the bridge-contractor and *ghat manjhee* to settle with the boatmen that the boatmen must set the boats on fire upon a signal from them (Jwala Prasad, Tatya Tope, Azimullah, etc.) and jump off and swim to shore, the instant the Europeans get into the boats."

In the first place, the veracity of this *Diary* has been seriously questioned by Dr. Sen.

*Deposition no. 20.

In the second place, no particulars of the letter to which Nanak Chand refers have been given in the *Diary*. Who wrote that letter ? To whom was it addressed ? How did Sham Singh get that letter and from whom ? There is no answer to these questions in the *Diary*. The statement has thus no more value than a hearsay statement but under the rules of evidence no value can be attached to such evidence. In fact hearsay evidence is no evidence at all and for that reason is inadmissible in a court of law.

Nanak Chand's Journal contains two references to the alleged plot. The first is under date June 20 and is in the following words :

"*The 20th June, Saturday*. A great friend of mine has sent me a piece of correct news today to the effect that a consultation was held at the Nana's, i.e. among the following persons, viz. the Allahabad Maulvi, the Chaudhari Azimullah, Shah Ali, Ahmadullah, Ahmad Ali Khan Vakil, Akbar Ali, Baba Bhatt, Jwala Prasad and the Bala, and General Tika Singh and others. It was suggested that there was no other way of taking the entrenchment than by using stratagem, i.e. that they should swear and pledge their words, and so induce the Europeans to come out, and then despatch them : for that they must kill them in the long run, and fighting was inconvenient as it cost the loss of many lives. *The Nana did not consent to this* ; but Bala said he approved of the arrangement. A further consultation was to be held at the spot where the Nana erected a hospital for the wounded and where doctor Hilaluddin attended, but I could not learn what it was all about. The fighting goes on as usual."

In the beginning of his Journal Nanak Chand has unequivocally stated that he was on the most inimical terms with Nana Saheb, that before the outbreak he had been carrying on litigation against Nana Saheb in the court of the Principal Sadar Ameen of Kanpur and subsequently in appeal in the Sadar Court for a sum of Rs.3,04,70,653-11-5, on behalf of one Chimnaji Apa who was claiming Baji Rao's property, and that he had more than once complained to the District Magistrate, Kanpur, about Nana Saheb's hostility towards the British. Therefore, when Nanak Chand says that Nana Saheb "*did not consent to this*", he would not be making an imaginary statement.

As regards the others stated to be in the conspiracy, it will be seen that Nanak Chand refers only to a suggestion that was said to have been made at the meeting about "stratagem" ; there was no decision at all at that meeting. The matter was to have been considered at another meeting to be held at another place. Whether the question was discussed at another meeting and, if so, what the final decision was, has not been mentioned in the Journal. So, this evidence also does not prove the existence of a plot.

In Nanak Chand's Journal it has been stated under date June 25, 1857, that after the agreement had been reached between Nana Saheb and General Wheeler, Hulas Singh Kotwal had been ordered to arrange for the boats. "The Kotwal had given strict orders to the Commissariat *ghat-manjhee* to lay down a *firm* flooring on each boat and he has agreed . . . ." What was the necessity for this "firm flooring" when the plan, as alleged, was to destroy the Europeans on the Ghat itself ?

From the above analysis it will be seen that there is no direct evidence to prove the existence of a plot to kill the Europeans on the Ghat. There is, of course, some circumstantial evidence, but that is completely outweighed by other circumstantial evidence according to which there could have been no such plot. Hence it must be held that no previous plan was laid out for finishing the Europeans at the Ghat. The happenings

were due to circumstances arising at the time of embarkation and to other circumstances to which a reference has been made in a subsequent section of this chapter.

D. POINTS COMMON TO BOTH BIBIGHAR AND SATTICHAURA.

"Reading them (the evidence collected by Colonel Williams) carefully and without bias today one must doubt whether the Nana Saheb was guilty of complicity in the murders of our women and children as he is generally believed to have been. I am rather of the opinion that his hand, though guilty, was forced by his more blood-thirsty followers whose acts he dared not disavow. Even in the present time, and in our own country, we can point to similar toleration of equally dastardly outrages. It is certain that on more than one occasion the Nana befriended the helpless creatures ; indeed, treated them with actual kindness. The massacre at the Ghat was certainly planned with satanic genius, and by a master-mind, which latter the Nana certainly did not possess".—Lt. Col. F. C. Maude in *Memories of the Mutiny : with which is incorporated the personal narration of John Walter Sherer,* two volumes, pages 108-109.

"In the absence of some proof, I should be sorry—especially after the letters I have read on the subject– to attribute to the man (Nana Saheb) that fiendish treachery and horrible massacre which took place at Kanpur in July, 1857. Nana Saheb had seen so much of English gentlemen and ladies, was personally (if not intimately) acquainted with so many of the sufferers, that it is only fair to suppose that when he ordered boats to be got ready he was sincere in his desire that the Christians should find their way to Calcutta, and that what ensued was in violation of his orders, and the act of those who wished to place for ever between Nana Saheb and the British Government an impassable barrier, so far as peace and reconciliation were concerned. No one knew better than Nana Saheb that, in the event of the British becoming again the conquerors of India, the very fact of his having spared the lives of those who surrendered would have led to the sparing of his own life, and hence the promise he made to Sir Hugh Wheeler."—JOHN LANG, *Wanderings in India and other Sketches of Life in Hindostan,* pp. 412-13.

The wordings of Nana Saheb's *Ishtaharnama* quoted earlier in this chapter appear to have the impress of sincerity and his assertion that he had no hand in the destruction of the prisoners should not be summarily set aside. Whether he had actually a hand in that or not, he could never expect to be treated by the British in the event of his surrender. He could not, therefore, think of surrender in any contingency whatever—this he made clear in the *Ishtaharnama* by saying "and while I live, will fight". What motive, therefore, could he have in trying to refer to his innocence. At the time the *Ishtaharnama* was issued the mass of the people could have no love for the British (though the uprising had been suppressed), if only for the reason that the British had exacted cruel reprisals on a large scale without proof of individual guilt. And so Nana Saheb's declaration of his innocence could not have been intended to placate his countrymen either. According to the principles applicable to courts a person is taken as stating the truth unless proved facts or more trustworthy evidence or a motive can be established for his making a false statement. In the case of an under-trial, for instance, it can be argued that he has a motive for telling untruth, the motive being to escape punishment. But even in criminal trials weight is, in appropriate cases, attached to the statement of the alleged offender.

In the case of Nana Saheb's *Ishtaharnama* there is no apparent reason to suppose that Nana Saheb was not stating the truth when

he averred that he had no hand in the destruction of the women and the children in Bibighar—he was not a prisoner in the dock nor is it possible to think of any motive which would have impelled him to make a false declaration.

It is also on record that although Nana Saheb had grievances against Lord Dalhousie, the previous Governor-General, he was friendly with British officers as well as with non-official Europeans resident at Kanpur and with the Commissioner who was stationed at Bithoor during the life-time of Baji Rao. He occasionally invited them, with their women-folk to entertainments in his palace at Bithoor. His good relations with these officers were reciprocated by the latter who showed him all consideration within the limits of Lord Dalhousie's policy. The Commissioner had even gone to the extent of recommending that some portion of the annual pension of Rs.8 lakhs formerly received by the Peshwa should be continued to his heirs, a recommendation which annoyed Lord Dalhousie so much that in a minute dated September 15, 1851, he observed : " I consider that the suggestion of the Acting Commissioner is uncalled for and unreasonable."

Nana Saheb's expressions and actions of friendliness to the Europeans were later described as "outward relations of civility" (Sherer's *Account*) and "outward display of friendliness" (Kanpur Gazetteer). This imputation was unfair because before the outbreak of the "Mutiny" no British officers doubted the sincerity of Nana Saheb in his goodness towards the English. Even after the possibility of revolt drew nearer, the District Magistrate, Mr. Hillersdon, had approached Nana Saheb for help. He was then residing at Bithoor, and came with 200 of his own soldiers and two guns. On May 26, he was put in charge of the Treasury which was near his own house in Nawabganj. It would be improper to suggest that all this faith in the sincerity of Nana Saheb was misplaced. The position appears to be that the course of events at Kanpur compelled Nana Saheb to fight the British and in so fighting he tried to adhere, so far as was possible in those days of excitement, to considerations of humanity. For how else is it possible to explain his action in sending the following note to General Wheeler in the entrenchment on the morning of June 6 :

"WE ARE GOING TO BEGIN THE ATTACK. WE WANT TO WARN AND THEREFORE SEND THIS PREVIOUS NOTICE TO YOU."

In the circumstances above described it is extremely improbable that Nana Saheb should have ordered the extermination of the unfortunate prisoners at Bibighar. Sir George Trevelyan in his *Cawnpore* writes about Nana Saheb thus : "Nothing could exceed the cordiality which he constantly displayed in his intercourse with our countrymen. The persons in authority placed an implicit confidence in his friendliness and good faith, and the ensigns emphatically pronounced him a capital fellow". In the absence of definite proof, which is entirely lacking, it is unjust to hold such a person as being directly and personally responsible for the foul happenings either at the Ghat or at Bibighar.

And lastly, in fairness to Nana Saheb who has been greatly maligned by Englishmen using high rhetoric in showering abuse on him, the view can be held that, at all events, his declaration of innocence in his *Ishtaharnama* is an expression of his sincere repentance over whatever part he may have played in the Bibighar tragedy.

E. THEN WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY ?

In the very nature of things connected with Bibighar, it is not possible to come to a definite conclusion as to who precisely should be held responsible for the foul deed. This

is so because several parties were involved and the evidence recorded by Colonel Williams is not helpful in assessing the part of the various parties in the perpetration of the crime. More than sixty witnesses were examined by the Colonel and many of them had to say something about Bibighar. While on many points the witnesses have contradicted each other, there are some matters on which surprisingly enough several witnesses have almost repeated the same testimony. On a deeper study of the depositions it would appear, however, that this cohesion is in respect of things of which the witnesses had *heard*, but which they had not *seen*. For instance, many witnesses stated that a sawar had taken away General Wheeler's daughter, but they had all heard about this, not seen the occurrence themselves. The evidentiary value of such hearsay statements is negligible.

Then there is also the point that the witnesses were afraid lest anything said by them might implicate them directly or indirectly. This was the reason why persons who could have been good and reliable witnesses did not come forward to tender evidence. To this difficulty Colonel Williams has referred in his *Review of the Evidence*.

It is due to these handicaps that on this important issue the evidence is not of much value though on other points of lesser interest the statements made do enable a rough and ready picture of the events to be reconstructed.

Many witnesses deposed that the order for the slaughter was given by Nana Saheb; some others said that it was given either by Nana Saheb or by Bala Saheb or by Tatya Tope, and so on. But on a close examination it would appear that this part of their statements was more in the nature of a surmise than the averment of an actual fact. They saw no written order of the Nana; they did not see him giving the order, while those who said that they saw him giving the order were saying so in the belief that the giver of the order was no other than Nana Saheb himself. Now, Nana Saheb came into prominence at Kanpur only on the occurrence of the "Mutiny"; prior to that he was living in the seclusion of Bithoor, occasionally entertaining British officers and their families to varied entertainments. It was, therefore, unlikely that people outside Bithoor could recognise the Nana. Nevertheless, many persons belonging to places far away from Bithoor avowed in their evidence that they saw and recognized the Nana at the head of a party of rebels on this occasion or that occasion—an averment which is highly improbable.

The evidence also loses much of its weight so far as this point is concerned because no serious endeavour was made to cross-examine the witnesses. Whenever such an attempt was made the truth came out only *after* cross-examination, not before. Let us take an example. In his evidence, Chheda, a servant of Mr. Thomas Greenway, merchant, stated that the women and the children were massacred by the sepoys on the orders of Tatya Tope and Bala Bhatt. "I was standing at the time in the verandah", says Chheda, "and heard Tatya Tope and Bala Bhatt order the sepoys to massacre the ladies and children, which order they carried out". It was then put to him that according to other witnesses the sepoys had refused to murder the ladies and that five other persons (not sepoys) murdered them with swords, and he was asked to say whether he personally witnessed the massacre of the ladies. To this Chheda gave an answer quite different from his earlier reply. He said that "when I heard the order given for the massacre of the ladies, through fear, I left the place and therefore did not witness the massacre". Another inconsistency in his evidence which was brought out on close cross-examination was that he had previously stated that Tatya Tope and Bala Bhatt "came to the ladies accompanied by armed sepoys for the purpose of massacring them and the children, hearing

which they all shrieked". On cross-examination, he said quite a different thing, namely : "Tatya Tope and Bala Bhatt, when they gave the order for the massacre of the ladies, were in the compound of the house where the Nana lived which was quite close to the Bibighar where the ladies were confined".

Depositions of many other witnesses suffer from the same fault. And when it came to any accusation against Nana Saheb it was assumed that the witness was telling the truth and nothing but the truth. So no searching questions were put to the witnesses by the inquiring officer. But though it is easy to find fault with the witnesses and the inquiring officer at this distance of time, one should not forget that when the inquiry was made the whole atmosphere was vitiated by all sorts of rumours of which Nana Saheb was the chief target. The British officers who conducted the inquiry were neither judges of law courts nor trained in the art of judicial inquiries, so it is not surprising that they too, like the witnesses, were swayed by the general gossip-mongering. The name of Nana Saheb had created such a dark impression on the English mind that it did not then occur to the officers to pause and ponder over the allegations and try to go deeper into them. As Nana Saheb himself had reached beyond the possibility of capture, the witnesses found it convenient, both with the idea of exonerating themselves as well as to give satisfaction to the British, to cast all blame on his name. Even those who may have been well-disposed towards Nana Saheb knew that their statements could do no physical harm to the Nana because he was beyond the reach of the authorities.

It is in these circumstances that the evidence concerning both Bibighar and Sattichaura leads to no definite conclusion as to the person or persons on whom responsibility in each case rested although a large number of witnesses had been examined.

What appears probable, however, is that the woman, commonly called the Begum,* had a prominent hand in this affair. She is said to have brought some sort of order (from whom and to what effect is not clear) on the basis of which she asked the sepoys of the guard (or other sepoys) to shoot and kill the inmates of the house. On their refusal, she somehow arranged to procure two or three executioners and two other men who, with drawn swords, entered the house and did the job. Whether she did all this on her own accord or under directions from others remains a mystery, but a version has been put forward that this was all her own doing or almost her own doing.† But whether she acted on her own or under someone's instructions does not detract from the horrible nature of the job nor does it provide any extenuation of the foul deed which could in no circumstances be defended.

Coming now to Sattichaura, the circumtances lead to the very probable conclusion that there was no pre-planning. What appears to be probable is that some incident during the course of the embarkation of the evacuees took place which caused provocation to the sepoys and their leaders making them use the weapons which were originally intended as a routine matter of caution and as incidental to the arrangements for evacuation. The possibilities of this aspect of the matter have been discussed in the chapter on Sattichaura Ghat, Chapter 20.

*This lady's real name was Husaini Khanum. She was a girl in the employ of Peshwa Baji Rao and continued in the family even after his death. She was looking after the ladies confined in Bibighar and served food to them.

†This is what was told to Sgt. Forbes-Mitchell by Mohammad Ali Khan, the Engineer rebel, shortly before his execution : "This information I have from General Tatya Tope who quarrelled with the Nana on this same affair. What I tell you is true. The murder of the European women and children at Kanpur was a woman's crime. But what cause she had for enmity against the unfortunate ladies, I do not know ; I never enquired".—Forbes-Mitchell, page 191. An account of this great patriot, Engineer Mohammad Ali Khan, appears in Appendix D.

F. QUESTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Dr. Sen, while practically exonerating Nana Saheb of the happenings at Sattichaura, has nevertheless suggested that he could not escape moral responsibility for Bibighar because he was the leader of the rebels at Kanpur in those fateful days. The late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has expressed his view with somewhat greater definiteness in the *Foreword* to Dr. Sen's book. This is what he writes :

"It is said that he* had them† murdered in retaliation of the atrocities perpetrated by the British in Allahabad. One wrong does not however justify another. Nana Saheb must be held responsible for the murder of these helpless prisoners."

With utmost respect to Maulana Saheb one cannot help noticing the inconsistency in the above observations. In the first place he says that "it is *said*" which means that the point is not proved or established ; the word 'said' denotes only a possibility, not a certainty. And yet from this mere *possibility* Maulana Saheb draws the untenable conclusion that Nana Saheb was, in fact, responsible for the murder.

On the moral plane the responsibility must extend further back into history rather than be confined to Nana Saheb in respect of Kanpur, and to other leaders of the revolt in respect of similar happenings at places where the latter had their sway. The point is that these regrettable incidents of 1857 were incidental to an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow the British. The British themselves had established their foot-hold in India on account of the dissensions amongst the former rulers of Indian territories and had the latter acted in association with each other to resist British domination the mutiny would not have taken place because the British would not have been in India at all. Consequently, the incidents complained of, would also never have happened. The moral responsibility thus goes back to many known and unknown figures further back in Indian history.

And then the English themselves must share at least the moral responsibility for these incidents. They had no moral justification to establish themselves as rulers in India and, therefore, they ought to share the moral responsibility for the happenings on the Indian side. It is also to be remembered that the doings at Sattichaura and Bibighar took place after the hideous acts of cruelty had been done by General Neill and his soldiers at Allahabad. The sepoys of Kanpur who had heard of these inhuman atrocities on their countrymen were burning with rage. Fuel was added to fire by the misdeeds at Fatehpur by Havelock's troops marching from Allahabad for the relief of Kanpur. All these things filled the hearts of the Kanpur sepoys with bitter feelings against the white race and they were longing for vengeance. No wonder, therefore, that in this state of mind they lost sense of discrimination. And thus it is that the moral guilt for Kanpur must be shared by the English people too. In this context Dr. Sen has very aptly observed : "If Nana is held legally responsible for the crimes of his followers, the moral guilt must be shared by Neill."‡

Through this process of diffusion of moral responsibility we are left with very little in the way of moral responsibility of Nana Saheb.

*Nana Saheb.

†Women and children confined in Bibighar.

‡Page 15 of *Eighteen Fifty-seven.*

While on this question, certain other matters of broader implication might be mentioned although they do not mitigate the horror of the happenings.

In the days when the rebellion took place the only method of settling disputes between nations was resort to arms. Mahatma Gandhi had not yet been born and the technique of *ahimsa* and non-violence had not been heard of. The only method then known to the world for resisting an aggressor was to take up arms against him. The English themselves had acquired their territories in India through force of arms. No Indian prince had willingly surrendered his dominions to the East India Company. The Company established its rule with the aid of troops, both European and Indian.

What was then to be done if Indians thought that there should be self-rule and that the British domination should cease. There were no constitutional means available by which this could be done. There was no elected Government which could be ousted by vote. And if the Government could not be ousted by vote, the only means to do away with it was by means of the bullet.

The English, having established an empire in India through the use of force, would never have willingly given up their territories at the mere wish of the Indians. (The position in 1947 when the British withdrew from India without bloodshed pertains to another period of history and there was no possibility of this happening in 1857). Thus, in all the circumstances of the case the Indians could only rise in arms against the British power — a process designed to expel the British forcibly from India.

Having thus decided to finish the British rule, the leaders of the revolt, the soldiers and the civilian population had no alternative but to exterminate the English by a sudden uprising. If Englishmen were allowed to leave one town and proceed to another, that would have meant the giving of an opportunity to them to collect themselves and to wrest power again from Indians. And yet, though the destruction of Englishmen was the only course open to Indian leaders, instances are not wanting when, at a number of places, the Indian sepoys and their leaders asked the Europeans to leave the city with their women and children and even arranged for their safe escort outside the town. Some instances of this kind have been described in the section entitled *Merciful Indians* in Chapter 48.

Looking at the matter from this aspect, it would be unfair to accuse Indian leaders of having planned the destruction of the British. If anything, these Indians were fighters for the freedom of their country and in the course of that fight, which was of the nature of total war, English commanders, soldiers and civilians had to be finished. It is impossible to speak of war without speaking of destruction of human beings. A party to an armed conflict cannot accuse the other party of killing its commanders and soldiers. The British Government was a party to the conflict and it had, therefore, to take the consequences of that conflict, consequences which involved destruction of lives on both sides. The killing of Englishmen would, of course, have been unjustified if the English had said that they were leaving the country with their bag and baggage with no intention of returning and offering hostages for the due performance of their promise. But there was no such gesture on the part of the English. On the contrary, they declared that they would re-establish their power and take revenge.

We have also a rule in the general law of the land of all countries that a person is excused from the blame of causing the death of a person who commits, or is about to commit, criminal assault on him. This is also a recognised moral law. Even Mahatma Gandhi justified the use of violence by a woman in order to protect her chastity—violence which, according to him, could be carried to the extent of causing the death of

the culprit. The practice of warfare goes further in the matter of destruction of life. For, warfare is nothing but legalised destruction of life of the combatants on both sides to a conflict.

In a war the question of numbers on either side is immaterial. A commander with a large force would be justified in annihilating a small detachment of the enemy. Therefore, to say that the sepoys, whose number was large, unjustly attacked and killed small parties of Europeans would not be a tenable proposition in the context here discussed.

"The will of God prevails. In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be, wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

BRITISH VENGEANCE AT KANPUR AND BITHOOR

A. KANPUR.

THE PLUNDERING.

NEILL'S ATROCITIES.

B. BITHOOR.

DESTRUCTION OF NANA'S PALACE.

THE CARNAGE.

"The English soldier is never a model of forbearance. When the blood is up and the drink is down he is very terrible to all who come across his path. Even in fair fight with a Christian enemy, there are times and seasons when the instincts of a brutal nature are stronger than the conscience and the reason of the man. The honourable resistance of brave men fighting for their hearths and altars, has often roused the passions of our soldiery to such a height that they have spared neither sex nor age, yielded to no pity, and abstained from no crime. But never, since England had a standing army, have such provocations assailed our fighting-men as those which hardened the hearts of Havelock's battalions on their march to Kanpur."—SIR JOHN KAYE*

A. KANPUR.

THE PLUNDERING

On arrival at Kanpur on July 17, 1857, Havelock's army was encamped on the Parade ground. The occupation of Kanpur was wholly military and so all authority was vested in the military commander. On July 18, Sherer, with the permission of General Havelock, had the re-establishment of British power proclaimed in several places. He later met almost the whole of the mercantile population at the Kotwali where they expressed great delight at the return of the English. He also appointed a Kotwal and the city police and took other measures of a civil nature.

This was all right so far as it went, but mention must be made of the terrible vengeance of the re-established rulers. "It mattered to them very little whom they killed so long as they killed somebody. After the first outbreak of joy and welcome the inhabitants of Kanpur began to be aware that the English were no longer the same men, if indeed they were men at all. The

History of the Sepoy War, Volume II, page 389.

citizens, with their wives and children, poured forth into the country . . . . From noon till midnight on the Lucknow and Delhi highways were to be seen immense mobs rushing eastward and westward in headlong haste. They did well both for their own security and for our honour. Of what did take place, the less said the better . . . . The heat of the climate and the conflict, the scarcity of food and the constant presence of disease, the talk which they (English soldiers) had heard at Calcutta, the deeds that they had been allowed, and even enjoined, to commit during their upward progress, had depraved the conscience and destroyed the self-control of our unhappy soldiers"—so writes Sir George Trevelyan in his *Cawnpore.*

The following extract from Brigadier Neill's Journal gives some idea of the plundering : "*Wednesday*, 22nd. . . . . There is great plundering going on by the troops—most disgraceful—and on the part of the Commandants, more particularly the Sixty-fourth, a disinclination to prevent their men misconducting themselves. I should have adopted very decided steps with all these regiments, and this force at first, but this has been neglected. All have taken to plundering, and the example set by officers has been very bad indeed ; the plundering of the merchants and shop-keepers in the city by bands of soldiers and Sikhs has been most outrageous, and there has been no check to it. Orders here seem to be unattended to."

Further proof of the carnage committed by the European soldiers is provided by the fact that General Havelock, a sensible and God-fearing Englishman, had to issue this order : "The marauding in this camp exceeds the disorders which supervened on the short-lived triumph of the miscreant Nana Saheb. A Provost-Marshal has been appointed, with special instructions to hang up, in their uniform, all British soldiers that plunder. This shall not be an idle threat. Commanding officers have received the most distinct warnings on the subject."

A fine of three lakhs of rupees was imposed on the city of Kanpur as a punishment for having accepted the rule of Nana Saheb. This sum was successfully realized for there were but few protests. One was from a goldsmith who claimed that he was not a regular resident of the city. He engaged a solicitor from Calcutta, but the plea was not listened to. On his enquiry, the barrister was informed by Sherer that if the money was not paid it would be realized as an arrear of land revenue which meant that his client could be put under arrest. The protest was thereupon given up.

But General Havelock remained at Kanpur only for a few days. On July 25, he led his force across the Ganga to the relief of Lucknow. His place was now taken by Brigadier Neill who had arrived from Allahabad on July 20 and this officer did all that was possible to dishonour the name of the English people by resorting to deeds of a most revolting character.

At Allahabad, Neill had received telegraphic orders from the Commander-in-Chief praising Havelock's victory in the battle of Fatehpur and adding that as Havelock's health was not strong and as the season was very trying it was necessary to place the command of the advancing force in hands in whom perfect confidence can be placed so that he could take over if Havelock became unfit for duty. Neill was chosen for the job, promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General and directed immediately to join Havelock, making over the command of Allahabad to the next senior officer.

NEILL'S ATROCITIES

So Neill arrived at Kanpur on July 20 with a force of 400 men. He was well received by Havelock who, however, fore-warned him that he (Neill) had no authority whilst the

General was there ; that he was not to issue a single order. At the same time it was arranged that Havelock, while maintaining his chief command, would push on his arrangements for crossing the Ganga and Neill would be in charge of Kanpur. Neill's first act was to enquire into the circumstances of the massacre at Bibighar with the object of inflicting sordid punishments and striking terror. In one of his letters he wrote, "no one who has witnessed the scenes of murder, mutilation and massacre can ever listen to the word 'mercy' as applied to these fiends."

And Brigadier-General Neill soon made good his intention, for Havelock had gone on July 25 and he was now left in sole command of the station. What he did is best described in his own words. This is what he wrote in a letter which Sir George Trevelyan has quoted with a sense of profound shame and disgust :

"Whenever a rebel is caught he is immediately tried, and, unless he can prove a defence, he is sentenced to be hanged at once ; but the chief rebels or ring-leaders I make first to clear up a certain portion of the pool of blood, still two inches deep, in the shed where the fearful murder and mutilation of the women and children took place. To touch blood is most abhorrent to the high-caste natives. They think by doing so they doom their soul to perdition. Let them think so. My object is to inflict a fearful punishment for a revolting, cowardly, barbarous deed and to strike terror into these rebels. The first I caught was a soubahdar, or native officer, a high-caste Brahmin, who tried to resist my order to clean up the very blood he had helped to shed ; but I made the provost-marshal do his duty, and a few lashes soon made the miscreant accomplish the task. When done, he was taken out and immediately hanged and after death buried in a ditch at the road-side".*

Of other similar cases, one was a Muslim officer of the civil court who too had objected to cleaning the blood. He was likewise flogged and made to lick part of the blood with his tongue. He was the person whose son killed Neill's son many years afterwards for his father's maltreatment. An account of the case appears in Section I (*A Son's Revenge*) of Appendix D.

The Brigadier knew no compunction, for about these barbarous proceedings he unashamedly declared : "No doubt this is strange law, but it suits the occasion well, and I hope I shall not be interfered with until the room is thoroughly cleaned in this way".

Sir George Trevelyan then compares the misdeeds of Neill with the cruelty which twenty-five centuries ago Ulysses had inflicted on his unfaithful maid-servants for their moral lapses during his absence and adds that whereas the primary object of the Greek king was to sweep away the traces of the butchery, and make his palace clean and habitable, Neill "desired only to wound the sentiments of the doomed men, and prolong their prospect of death with a vista of eternal misery. And this, in the crisis of an insurrection of which the immediate cause was the belief that the British Government was attempting to tamper with caste".†

The courage and composure of those who had been executed at Kanpur has been described with remarkable frankness and clarity by Sherer :

"That I may not have to return again to this disagreeable subject, I will add a word or two about executions. As a rule, those who had to die died with extraordinary, I was going

*Trevelyan, pages 273-4.
†*Ibid*, page 275.

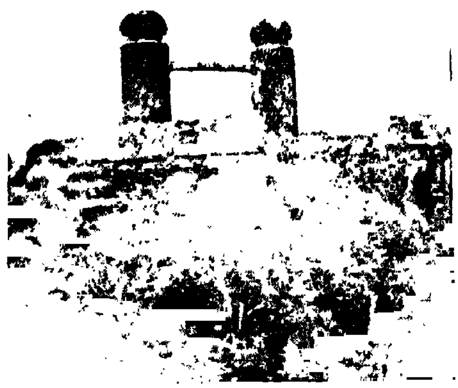


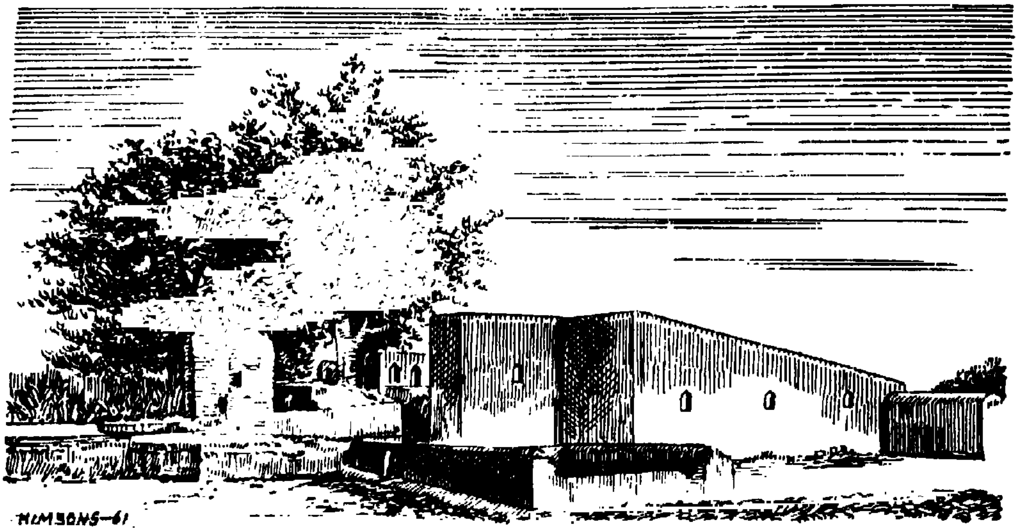
RUINS OF THE PESHWA'S PALACE

As a reprisal against the Nana, who could not be captured, the British satisfied their vengeance by destroying his palace which had originally been built by Peshwa Baji Rao for his exile at Bithoor. A great builder, Baji Rao had raised this mansion as a small sized replica of the famous Shaniwar Palace at Poona. The Shaniwar Palace was destroyed by accidental fire a few years after Baji Rao's departure from his capital in 1818 while its Bithoor replica was bombarded by revengeful British commanders a few years after his departure from the world, a grim irony of fate.

THE WELL IN THE PESHWA'S PALACE

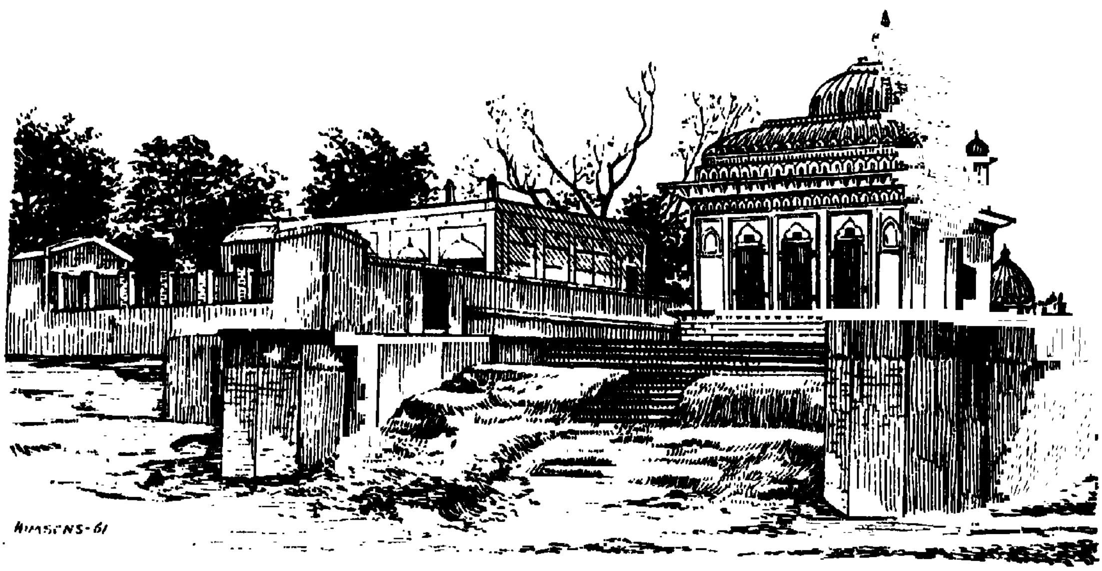
This is one of the several enormous wells which supplied water to the Peshwa's Palace. The wells escaped destruction, and are now used for irrigating the cultivation in the extensive area which once formed the compound of the palace. It was in one of these wells that Nana Sahib had concealed his huge treasure when he left Bithoor after his defeat at Kanpur. The description of the salvage of this treasure by the British may be read in chapter 30.





ANOTHER PART OF THE RUINS

In this picture can also be seen another well which for want of repairs for over a century, is now in a dilapidated condition.



SITE OF GANGA MANDIR, BITHOOR

The Ganga Mandir on the bank of the Ganga built by Peshwa Baji Rao, had stood by the side of the Peshwa's Temple (seen on the right of the picture). The Ganga Mandir was the most beautiful edifice in Bithoor at the time of the "Mutiny", and was furnished with glass-work of exquisite design. Like the Peshwa's palace, it fell to the wrath of the victorious British guns. The site on the left is now occupied by a *dharmashala* belonging to the family of Sir Lala Juggilal Kamlapat, the commercial magnates of Kanpur.



NANA SAHEB MEMORIAL AT BITHOOR

After Independence, the Uttar Pradesh Government have raised this memorial to Nana Saheb in the campus of what previously was the Peshwa's palace. This simple but dignified structure stands in the midst of a well laid out area of several acres enclosed by wire fencing, with an entrance gate on the main road of Bithoor. The pedestal carries a brief inscription in Devanagari which may be read at the end of chapter 12.



BAJI RAO'S SWORD

Amongst the heirlooms of the Nana was the famous sword of Peshwa Baji Rao II, valued at one lakh of rupees according to the currency prices of those days. The whereabouts of this sword after the mutiny are not known but Sri Devi Dayalu Gupta of Gupta Shastralaya, Kanpur claims that he had got possession of a sword of Nana Saheb. Here he is seen presenting the weapon to the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi, on July 1, 1957.

It has however, now been verified that this is not the same precious sword which Peshwa Baji Rao had brought with him from Poona to Bithoor after his abdication in 1818. The author had written to the President's Secretariat on this point and had received the reply that the case had been referred to the authorities of the National Museum, Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs for verification of the claim that it is a sword of Nana Rao".

The result of the verification has been stated as follows in the letter from the National Museum to the author, dated July 11, 1961:

"The sword was examined by this Museum and it was found that the blunt edge of the sword near the handle bears an inscription in Nagari characters. It reads "Nana Rao", followed by a swastika and a date in figures, namely 1921 of the Vikram Samvat corresponding to 1864-65 A.D. The lettering of the inscription is neither very clear nor of high order. The hilt bears an emblem said to be Nana Rao's emblem.

"The date given on the sword viz. 1921 Vikram, corresponding to 1864-65 A.D. does not seem to fit in with the life story of Nana Rao. There is no definite trace of Nana's activities after his defeat and flight from Kanpur on December 6, 1857. Early in 1859 Nana Rao fled to Nepal and wrote a defiant letter to General Hope Grant who was in charge of the military campaign in Awadh.

Since the sword bears the name of Nana Rao it is likely that it might have been in his use during his wanderings in the wild forests of Nepal, and, as such, the sword is of some importance."

to say, courage, but composure is the word : the Mahomedans, with hauteur, and an angry kind of scorn ; and the Hindoos, with an apparent indifference altogether astonishing. When the *London* steamship went down, south of the Land's End, the Captain—that noble fellow who, when offered a seat in the boat, said 'No, thank you, I will stay with the passengers',—about noon assembled all who could come into the saloon, and gave notice that he thought the ship would keep afloat till two o'clock. One who escaped related that, in answer to this notice, an old gentleman appeared at about half-past one having arranged his dress for a journey, strapped his wrappings together, and put his money into a girdle. Even in that supreme moment the Captain could not restrain a smile. Some of the Hindoos treated death exactly as if it were a journey."

"One man, positively under the shadow of the fatal tree, with only three or four minutes to live, when his waist-cloth was searched (for the benefit of his friends), did not object to one or two articles being taken out, but demurred, peevishly enough, to giving up a few apples of the jujube tree".*

Sherer records further that of all who had to meet their end there was, to his memory, only one man who died like a coward. He said that though he had not formally become a convert to Christianity, at heart he was a Christian and would do anything to show his sincerity. When the authorities failed to listen to this "he grovelled on the ground, screamed and cried, and piteously entreated for life. He would betray his cause, would turn informer, would deliver hundreds now in security and honour to the shambles—life, only life ! And the poor wretch, fainting and foaming, had to be lifted within reach of the rope".†

In his characteristic manner Sir John Kaye has condemned the barbarities at Kanpur and other places by observing rightly : "What is dreadful in the record of retribution is that some of our people regarded it not as a solemn duty or a terrible necessity, but as a devilish pastime, striking indiscriminately at the black races and slaying without proof of individual guilt".‡

B. BITHOOR.

DESTRUCTION OF NANA SAHEB'S PALACE

On July 19, General Havelock despatched Major Stevenson of the Madras Fusiliers with a detachment to Bithoor. The place was occupied without resistance and thirteen guns removed from it, besides a great deal of valuable property.

Nana Saheb's castle was found abandoned and at the mercy of the Major's soldiers. It was soon plundered and destroyed by being set on fire and by bombardment.

There are, however, conflicting accounts as to when the palace of the Peshwa was destroyed. Accordng to one version the mansion was destroyed in July, 1857, after Havelock had re-occupied Kanpur. The other account is that it was destroyed by Hope Grant in December, 1857, when he was returning to Kanpur after finally routing the forces of Nana Saheb at the battle of Sarai Ghat. This is the view of Dr. Sen who writes : "Bithur next demanded the attention of the victor and Brigadier Hope Grant was sent there. It was reported that Nana Saheb had slept here the night before the battle, but his palace was not the only object of British wrath. Along with it the temples were also

*Havelock's March on Cawnpore, pp. 203-4.
†Ibid. pp. 204-5.
‡History of Sepoy War, volume II, page 403.

demolished".* In support of this Dr. Sen has quoted Captain Oliver Jones as saying : "His (Nana's) palace was laid low, his mosque blown up, and so completely that there was literally not one stone left upon another".†

The Kanpur Gazetteer also contains apparently contradictory statements about the destruction of the Peshwa's palace. At page 217 it states that soon upon the re-occupation of Kanpur by Havelock a detachment was sent to Bithoor on July 19, 1857, that the place was found deserted and that "after destroying the Nana's palace and taking some abandoned guns" the detachment came back to Kanpur. In opposition to this it has been stated further on in the book at page 221 that on returning from Sarai Ghat, Hope Grant marched to Bithoor on December 11, 1857, there blowing up the temple and burning the palace, at the same time recovering a large amount of treasure concealed by the Nana. The position thus appears to be that on July 19, the palace was but partly destroyed ; that it was left to be razed to the ground on December 11 following.

Local tradition has it that in the Peshwa's palace there were some women-folk at the time it was set on fire. (This was quite probable because Nana Saheb had taken with him only five ladies of his house-hold when he crossed into Avadh). Terror-stricken the inmates ran to the roof of the building to save themselves. But there was no safety anywhere in the burning house—they were soon caught into flames and were roasted alive. It is also said that amongst the ladies who perished there was one named Maina, the unmarried daughter of Nana Saheb. But in recorded history there is no mention of Nana Saheb having had a daughter. There was, however, a maid-servant by the name of Maina Bai or Maina Vati in his house-hold, and the confusion has probably arisen from this. It is this girl who was probably burnt to death in the palace, for it is somewhere recorded that a beautiful young woman was seen burning in the Peshwa's *Bara* by an Englishman.

THE CARNAGE

All other buildings connected with the name of the Peshwa or Nana Saheb were razed to the ground. Amongst these was the glass temple of the Peshwa situated on the bank of the Ganga near the Maharaj Ghat. It was dedicated to Goddess Ganga and was known as Ganga Mandir. It was a very beautiful structure studded with coloured pieces of glass, and richly decorated. This too was reduced to ashes. Also destroyed partly was the marble temple of Saraswateshwar which Baji Rao had built in memory of his wife, Saraswati Bai. The inside of the temple was studded with precious stones. These were collected by the soldiers and thus its beauty was gone.

Nearby, there was the mansion of Tatya Tope. This too was burnt down. Several other buildings were similarly destroyed. In short, the British tried to obliterate the name of Nana Saheb by destroying every thing pertaining to him or his adoptive father. Twice at least a Government steamer made its appearance on the Ganga and opened fire on the buildings on the bank. The signs of the shots can still be seen.

The carnage at Bithoor is said to have continued for three days. Whoever was seen on the streets was shot down. On the first day the English soldiers plundered the houses for gold and silver and women's ornaments. The next day the Sikhs took utensils and house-hold goods and on the third day the Madras troops possessed themselves of shawls and wearing apparel.

*Dr. Sen, page 233.

†Page 50-51 of *Recollections of a Winter Campaign in India in 1857-58*, by Captain Oliver J. Jones.

Vishnu Datt Godse has given the following account of the doings of the British at Bithoor :

After making arrangements for two days a party of Havelock's force proceeded to Bithoor on the morning of the third day. No resistance was offered because there were no troops to do so. The Europeans entering the town began to shoot whosoever was found on the streets. In this way hundreds were killed and the town presented a deserted appearance. Thereafter, a merciless campaign of plunder began. Some persons taking the savings of their lives with them were wanting to cross the Ganga at Dhruva Ghat. They were intercepted and killed by British soldiers ; those who succeeded in getting to the other bank were molested by undesirable characters.

The palace of Nana Saheb was also pillaged. It was then bombarded. The beautiful Ram Mandir temple was also destroyed. They also destroyed the attractive garden of Nana Saheb.

Godse further records that the British also destroyed the temple of Saraswateshwar Mahadev at the bank of the Ganga. This temple had been constructed by Maharaja Baji Rao in the memory of his wife, Saraswati Bai. It is said that this lady possessed great talents and excelled all in charity-giving. She managed the internal affairs of the palace with great efficiency ; nobody dared to act against the rules of etiquette and behaviour. She used to turn out immediately any servant who defaulted in duty or decorum. Maharaja Baji Rao never interfered in her management. When she died, Baji Rao was heart-broken. As she was breathing her last, Baji Rao got twenty-five thousand rupees given in charity through her hands. One and a half lakh of rupees were spent in the performance of the funeral rites. At the place where her body was burnt, Baji Rao erected a magnificent temple and named it after the deceased as the temple of Saraswateshwar. The temple was made of marble. The Europeans destroyed this temple too and broke and threw away the image.

Godse has recorded that no mark of the temple was left. But at that very place a temple can still be seen. Some say that this is not the original temple, but a partly reconstructed one on the walls of the original structure. What appears to have happened is that the temple was damaged by the removal of the interior decorating material. A local story about this temple has been given in Chapter 7 dealing with the town of Bithoor.

"NO BRUTALITY, NO TORTURE, HAS EVER MADE ME PLEAD FOR MERCY, BECAUSE I PREFER TO DIE WITH MY HEAD UP, WITH UNSHAKEABLE FAITH AND DEEP CONFIDENCE IN THE DESTINY OF MY COUNTRY, RATHER THAN LIVE IN SUBMISSION AND SPURNING OF SACRED PRINCIPLES." - PATRICE LUMUMBA, first Prime Minister of the Congo, in the last letter to his wife, written shortly before his execution by political opponents, 'after being subjected to shameful tortures' in January 1961.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

THE BATTLE OF BITHOOR

CONCENTRATION OF NATIONALIST TROOPS AT BITHOOR.

HAVELOCK TOWARDS LUCKNOW.

THE ENGAGEMENTS.

THE INCIDENT OF ANGOORI TIWARI.

CONCENTRATION OF NATIONALIST TROOPS AT BITHOOR

Shortly after the departure of General Havelock from Kanpur on July 25, 1857, nationalist forces began to gather at Bithoor. Amongst these were the men of the 42nd Native Infantry which, having mutinied at Sagar, crossed the Yamuna at Kalpi and, accompanied by some irregular cavalry, marched upon Akbarpur in the Kanpur district. It is recorded that "no corps showed more courage or greater ferocity" than this regiment.* It was supposed that from Akbarpur they would turn off towards Bithoor. However, before doing so they sent a body of men to destroy the temporary bridge over the Pandu. These men advancing rapidly attacked the thana at Sachendi, captured the thanedar and put him to death. The main force afterwards marched on Sheorajpur (near Bithoor) and here too the thanedar was shot and his body was hung downwards from a tree as a lesson to those siding with the British.

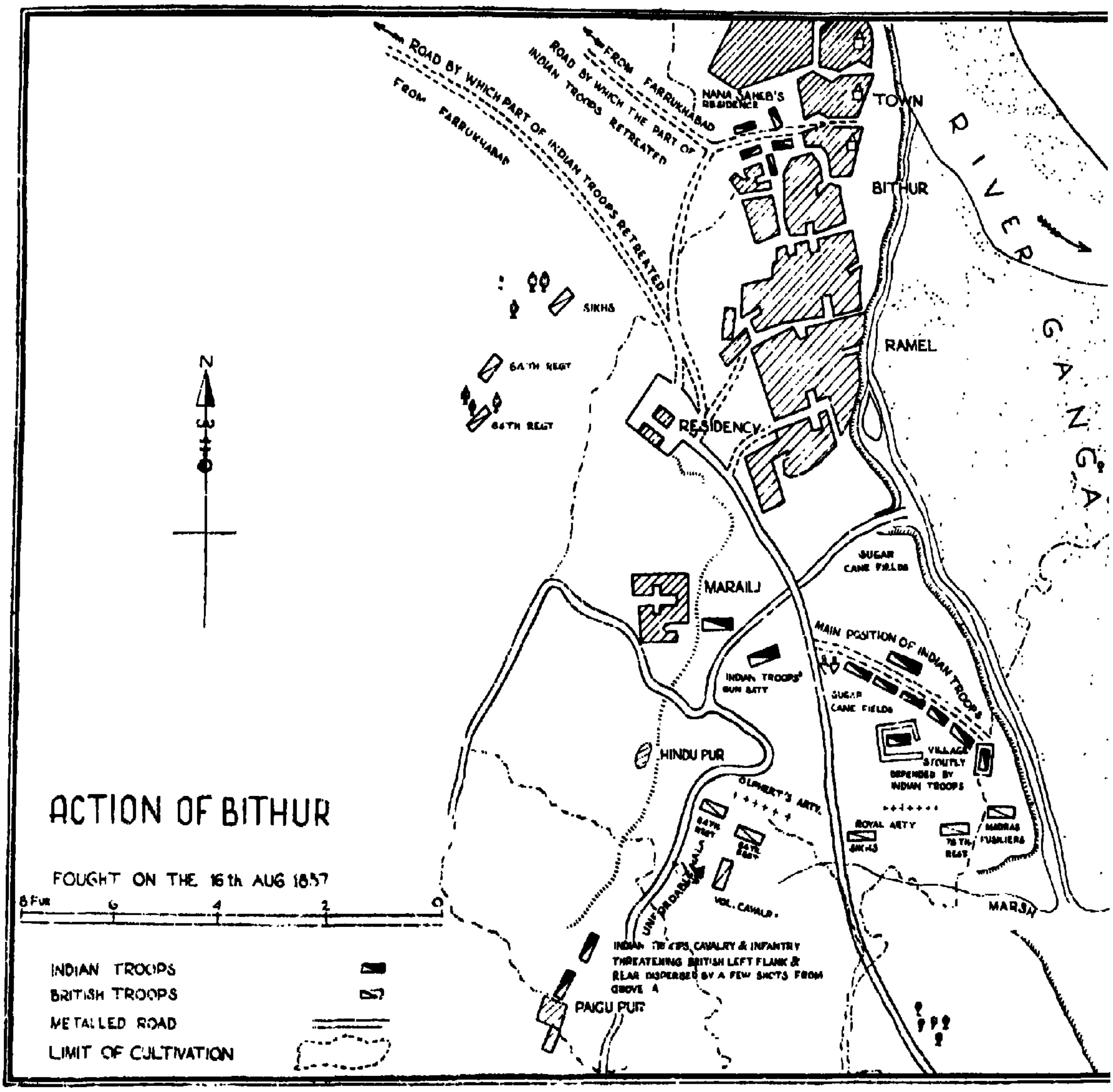
After leaving Sheorajpur all the troops of this regiment collected at Bithoor They were soon joined by the men of the 17th and other regiments and by the sawars of the 2nd Cavalry and 3rd Infantry. This large force was handicapped by the fact that it had only two small guns. Tatya Tope in command of it now and then sent out sawars in the suburbs of Kanpur during the night to cause uneasiness to the British garrison.

Brigadier Neill felt considerable anxiety by the presence of so large an army near Kanpur. He was, of course, quite alert and constantly marched out in the environs of the town with a couple of guns and all his available men, keeping the steamer also up and down the Ganga. This steamer made two war-like visits to Bithoor too. He thus tried to show in every way that he was prepared for all eventualities.

HAVELOCK TOWARDS LUCKNOW

In the meanwhile General Havelock was having a hard time in his march on Lucknow. On July 26. he encamped at the village of Mangalwar six miles on the Kanpur-Lucknow road. Reaching Unnao after three days he encountered a strong sepoy force and a hard battle was fought. The

* Sherer's *Narrative*, p. 13.



PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF BITHOOR

The battle of Bithoor was fought under the command of Tatya Tope on August 16, 1857, that is about a month after the British reoccupation of Kanpur. The nationalist forces were defeated but only after a gallant fight about which the British Commander, General Havelock, has spoken in high terms.



TATYA TOPE IN ACTION

This picture is variously described as referring either to the battle of Bithoor or to the battle of Kalpi, but both of which were grim struggles in which Tatya Tope was in supreme command on the Indian side.

sepoys then retreated to Bashiratganj, a small walled town a few miles ahead of Unnao. Here too he gained a victory but at a severe cost to his small force.

At this time he received the news of the mutiny at Danapur which rightly led him to believe that he could not expect to receive re-inforcements from Calcutta in the near future. He now felt that he could not hold his own against the determined nationalist troops which were disputing his advance at every stage. In these circumstances he regretfully decided to fall back upon Mangalwar, there to await re-inforcements without which he could not proceed to Lucknow. Reaching Mangalwar he apprised the Commander-in-Chief of his difficulties : "My force is reduced by sickness and repeated combats to 1,364* rank and file, with ten ill-equipped guns. I could not therefore move on to Lucknow with any prospect of success, especially as I had no means of crossing the Sye or the canal. I have therefore shortened my communications with Cawnpore by falling back two short marches, hitherto unmolested by the enemy. If I am speedily re-inforced by 1,000 more British soldiers and Major Olpherts' battery complete, I might resume my march towards Lucknow. . . ."**

On hearing of Havelock's retreat Brigadier Neill, who was only his second in command, wrote from Kanpur a censorious letter to the General, saying, "I deeply regret that you have fallen back one foot. The effect on our prestige is very bad indeed. . . . the belief among all is that you have been defeated and forced back. . . . The effect of your retrograde movement will be very injurious to our cause everywhere . . . you ought to advance again, and not halt until you have rescued, if possible, the garrison of Lucknow." These were improper and uncalled for observations from a subordinate, and Havelock wrote back saying that he did not want, and would not receive, any advice and reproof from an officer under his command. And the insulted Havelock pertinently added that "a consideration of the obstruction that would arise to the public service at this moment alone prevents me from taking the stronger step of placing you under arrest".†

Having in the meanwhile received a small reinforcement of 257 men from Kanpur, the General now again made his way towards Lucknow on August 3. At Bashiratganj there was again an engagement with the sepoys who had re-occupied the place. Although he won again, Havelock felt he could not risk the loss of his small force by continuing the march to Lucknow the passage to which was barred by some 30,000 nationalist troops here and there. He thought that he should keep his force intact until some error on the part of the Indian troops might enable him to cut his way through. He, therefore, retreated to his base at Mangalwar on August 11, but before he could reach there the nationalist forces again gave him a fight at Burhia-ki-Chauki.

The unhappy Havelock was now informed by Neill that the nationalist forces at Bithoor were showing aggressiveness and that he was in danger of being attacked at any moment. On August 11 he wrote to the General at his base at Mangalwar : "One of the Sikh scouts I can depend on has just come in and reports that 4,000 men and five guns have assembled today at Bithoor, and threaten Kanpur. I cannot stand this : they will enter the town, and our communications are gone; if I am not supported, I can only hold out here, can do nothing

* The original strength of his column was 1,500 men and ten light guns.

** Forrest. Vol. I, p. 490.

† Forrest, Vol. I. pp 491-92.

beyond our entrenchments. All the country between this place and Allahabad will be up, and our powder and ammunition on the way up—if the steamer as I feel assured does not start——will fall into the hands of the enemy, and we will be in a bad way".*

THE ENGAGEMENTS

On receiving this letter General Havelock considered it his duty to return to relieve Neill of a very genuine anxiety by dislodging the nationalist force from Bithoor. Hurriedly he re-crossed the Ganga to arrive at Kanpur on August 13. The forces of Tatya Tope had by now advanced quite near Kanpur. On August 15 Havelock sent Neill to meet them. An engagement was fought near Kanpur and the nationalist force fell back on Bithoor.

Then on August 16 Havelock marched on Bithoor with a force of some 1,000 (750 Europeans and 250 Sikhs) and a complement of guns under his personal command. It took the British force eight hours to reach Bithoor after which there was a severe engagement.

The Indian troops under Tatya Tope had prepared a strong defensive position consisting of thick ramparts and flanked by entrenched quadrangles. At the back of this position was the town of Bithoor and on either side were two villages connected by earthworks. In front was plain land covered with sugarcane and castor plants with interspersed habitation in small hamlets. These provided good cover to the infantry.

As Havelock's force was advancing Tatya Tope sent a detachment of sawars to reconnoitre the position of the attacking column. These men were on the left flank of the British column and were soon subjected to fire from British guns. The two guns on Tatya's side at once returned the fire. Later, there was hand-to-hand fight. After a hard struggle the Indians fell back on their prepared defensive position. There was then an artillery duel between the two small guns of Tatya Tope and fourteen British guns. The Indian guns were so well served that the British were unable to dislodge them in spite of the greatly superior strength of their own batteries. This made such a great impression on General Havelock that he said that "he had not seen fire kept up so well since the days of Ferozshuhur" in the Punjab when the Sikhs had offered strong resistance in the First Sikh War.

Havelock, now realizing that nothing could be gained by returning the fire, ordered the guns to be captured by storming the breast-work. The operation succeeded and after a bitter struggle the two guns were captured. The Indian troops then fell back on the town of Bithoor. The British marched on and met with strong resistance from the troops behind barricaded houses. But the battle was already lost and Tatya Tope's troops escaped from the town.

The nationalist forces, though defeated in this engagement also, had fought bravely and with determination. General Havelock paid a compliment to them in a despatch in these words : "I must do the mutineers the justice to pronounce that they fought obstinately ; otherwise they could not for a whole hour have held their own, even with much advantages of ground, against my powerful artillery-fire."** Sherer too has recorded that the 42nd Native Infantry "really fought with great resolution from behind their *moorcha*".†

The British troops bivouacked that night at Bithoor. The next day they razed most

*Part of this letter has been quoted by Dr. Sen at page 207 of his book.

** Forrest, *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, p. 505

†*Havelock's March*, page 189, footnote.

of the buildings to the ground and returned to Kanpur the same day.*

Whether Nana Saheb was also with this force at Bithoor is a subject of controversy. Some writers have said that Nana Saheb had re-crossed to Bithoor from his camp at Fatehpur Chaurasi on the Avadh side. The question has been rendered confused by the fact that Sherer has given two conflicting versions of the affair. In his official *Narrative*, page 13, he is emphatic that Nana Saheb was not there. "It is certainly untrue", he writes, "though it has often been repeated, that the Nana re-crossed to Bithoor at this juncture ; he has never, since he left Bithoor, re-visited this bank". In his *Havelock's March on Kanpur*, he writes just the contrary : "Bithoor was defended by several regiments of mutinous sepoys, including cavalry and artillery. They had thrown up entrenchments with some skill, and besides fighting with halters round their necks, the Nana was defending what was left of his house-hold gods and altars".†

ANGOORI TIWARI

In connection with this battle Sherer has recorded a story about Angoori Tiwari, the spy of the Company's Government. He says that "our famous spy" was constantly bringing up the minutest description of the movements of the sepoys and especially those of Nana Saheb and his followers. In fact the attack on Bithoor had been undertaken mainly on the information brought by Angoori Tiwari. Fraser-Tytler, the Quarter-Master-General, often asked Angoori Tiwari where he got his information from and pretended to disbelieve that he had obtained anything by ocular observation. To this Tiwari had replied that he would prove things some day.

As the column was in the heat of attack on Bithoor, Fraser-Tytler was observing the position and movements of the opposing force. Angoori Tiwari then went up to him and in a whisper asked the Quarter-Master : 'Do you see that bit of white *kupra* (cloth) on a tree in front of you ? Well, take it down quickly and put it in your pocket.' Almost mechanically Tytler reached up to the branch, pulled down the cloth and put it in his pocket. After the action was over, Angoori Tiwari came up to Fraser again. The latter then took out the cloth from his pocket whereupon Angoori Tiwari asked 'just see if it fits this' and so saying he untied the end of his loin cloth and matched the piece which had been torn from it. Thus, Angoori Tiwari was able to prove it fully that on the previous night he had taken his observations himself.‡

Tatya's next move

After the defeat at Bithoor, part of Tatya Tope's troops went in the direction of Fatehgarh and part to Sheorajpur, about twelve miles from Kanpur on the Grand Trunk Road. General Havelock was apprehensive lest in his absence Tatya Tope might, with these men, attack Kanpur, so he hurriedly marched back to the city the next day although his troops had been completely exhausted by the previous day's march in the hot sun and by the subsequent fighting which had been very bitter.

On his part, Tatya Tope now directed his activities to Gwalior with a view to winning over the famous Gwalior Contingent (a force under British command) and the 10,000 personal troops of the Maharaja Scindhia. He succeeded, and with their help invested Kanpur again in the following December.

The story of the re-capture of Kanpur by this redoubtable hero appears in the next chapter.

***Havelock's March*, p. 189, footnote.
†*Ibid.* pages 189-90, footnote.
‡*Ibid.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

KANPUR AGAIN IN INDIAN HANDS—AGAIN LOST

TATYA TOPE WINS OVER THE GWALIOR CONTINGENT.

DIFFICULT SITUATION OF THE BRITISH FORCE AT KANPUR.

NANA SAHEB AND TATYA TOWARDS KANPUR : DEFEAT OF GENERAL WINDHAM.

KANPUR IN INDIAN HANDS AGAIN : ARRIVAL OF SIR COLIN CAMPBELL.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF KANPUR LOST.

BATTLE OF SARAI GHAT.

CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT : RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH AUTHORITY.

रात्रिर्गमिष्यति भविष्यति सुप्रभातम्
भास्वानुदेष्यति हसिष्यति पंकजश्री :;
इत्थम् विचिन्तयति पद्मगते द्विरेफे,
हा हन्त हन्त नलिनीम् गज उन्नमूल ।*

TATYA TOPE WINS OVER THE GWALIOR CONTINGENT

The vanquished Tatya Tope (and Nana Saheb, if he was with him) did not lose heart although he had lost an important battle and with it his base and stronghold of Bithoor. His forces were shattered and his guns and fighting material gone. With eyes still on Kanpur Tatya Tope began to think of re-organizing his broken forces and to raise new levies. He had to build up a strong force, but the task was not easy.

It then occurred to this military genius that there was at Gwalior the renowned Gwalior Contingent ** of 5,000 well-trained soldiers with the full complement of arms and ammunition. This Contingent consisted of Indian sepoys belonging to the same areas as the men of the Bengal Army, namely Avadh and the North-Western Provinces, and so they were inspired by the same feelings as the people of the Bengal Army. This Contingent was maintained by the East India Company under the Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance with the Gwalior Darbar. It was ostensibly maintained in the interests of the security of the Maharaja Scindhia

* The night will pass and the bright day will dawn: the sun will rise and the lotus will bloom again in all its beauty—while the bee, imprisoned in a closed lotus, was thus looking forward to a happy dawn, an elephant, alas! up-rooted the plant itself. [The lotus-flower closes its petals at night-fall and opens again at day-break.]

** This Contingent consisted of "the best troops in India which had never been beaten, and considered themselves 'invincible'—Forbes Mitchell, p. 150.

and was paid for by him. Nevertheless, full control over it was exercised by the British Government who raised, trained and officered it without reference to the Maharaja who had no authority over its affairs. It was to win over this Contingent that Tatya Tope now began to set his plans. Along with that he also planned to get to his side the 10,000 personal troops of the Maharaja himself.

In June 1857, mutiny had broken out at many more stations and the men of the Gwalior Contingent had also arisen. Most of the European officers of the Contingent were put to death on June 14, but their women and children were allowed to go unharmed. The Scindhia did not know what to do with these insurgents. He was thinking of inducing them, by payment, to leave Gwalior, but Major Macpherson, the Political Agent, advised the Ruler to keep on the men at Gwalior as long as possible. Macpherson rightly thought that if the mutineers left Gwalior they would certainly harass the English somewhere or the other. So the Maharaja took all of them into his own service and continued to pay their salaries punctually. But the men were not satisfied and asked the Maharaja to lead them against the British. The Maharaja, though inwardly in favour of the British cause, dared not give a flat refusal, but kept them on promises of his active support in due time.

On July 31, a critical situation was reached when a large body of mutineers from Indore and Mhow arrived at Gwalior. Prince Feroze Shah also arrived by this time at the head of 1,000 troops and several guns. The men of the Gwalior Contingent and Scindhia's own troops then pressed him to lead them to the help of the nationalist forces at Delhi. The Maharaja told them that the troops of Indore and Mhow should first march to Delhi and that he would follow them at the end of the rainy season. By this and other artifices the Maharaja succeeded in keeping them under control until September when Tatya Tope arrived to turn the scales.

After his repulse at Bithoor, Tatya Tope had proceeded to Jalaun,* and from there he watched the dissatisfaction of the Gwalior Contingent and the Scindhia's own troops. He then seized an opportune moment for proceeding to Gwalior about the middle of September to plead personally with the leaders of the Contingent. Many of them sincerely believed that the British were out to enchristian the Indian people and this was also the belief of the leading citizens of the town. From all these persons Tatya Tope received support. He had also his son-in-law residing in the city, and a resident of Bithoor was the Naib-Kotwal of Gwalior. These advantages made it possible for him to persuade the Contingent to march with him to Kalpi—the base of his operations. The winning over of these well-trained troops has been described as an act of great foresight and tact of Tatya Tope. But for his sagacity, this large army, which after having mutinied, was whiling away its time at the Cantonment of Morar (near Gwalior), would not possibly have been able to render any aid to the nationalist cause.

Vishnu Datt Godse has thus described the activities of Tatya Tope at Gwalior in his *Majha Pravas*: "One day in the month of *Bhadon* I found that there was a great hubbub in the town of Gwalior. Gathered at street-crossings the people were discussing things in a very mysterious manner. Cavalrymen were galloping hither and

* Another version is that from Bithoor Tatya Tope went to the camp of Nana Saheb in Fatehpur Chaurasi across the Ganga and there discussed matters with Nana Saheb. (This version proceeds on the basis that Nana Saheb was not present at the battle of Bithoor). It was then decided that Tatya Tope should go to Gwalior to win the Gwalior Contingent to his side. So Tatya Tope first went to Jalaun and then to Gwalior.

thither. Most of the shops were closed. Seeing all this I thought that this was all connected with the mutiny. It was then understood that Tatya Tope had come on behalf of Nana Saheb to ask the Shinde Sarkar (the Ruler) for troops. I saw Tatya Tope in the bazar ; he had won over four companies of the Morar Cantonment to his side. Afterwards, Tatya Tope told the Shinde Sarkar that during the days that he remained at Gwalior he had done no harm whatever to Gwalior or to the territories of the Maharaja and that therefore he should be given camels and other things. Thereupon, Jiyaji Rao Shinde (the Maharaja) and Dinkar Rao (the Diwan) went to meet him at the Cantonment of Morar which is at a distance of six miles from the city. Shinde Maharaj then informed Tatya Tope that he would give everything that was wanted, but that he (Tatya Tope) should leave his territory without doing any damage. After that Tatya Tope was honoured with betel, scent and the like by the Maharaja. Next day Shinde sent him away by giving carts, horses, elephants, camels, bullocks, mules and other miscellaneous paraphernalia and in this way got rid of the trouble over Gwalior."

This description is true so far as it goes, but it makes no mention that Tatya Tope also brought away with him the troops of the Gwalior Contingent. The position is, however, obscure and Dr. Sen too has not been able to clear it. He says that it was in October that these troops (who had been receiving their pay regularly from the Maharaja Scindhia and were staying inactive at Morar Cantonment, having mutinied in June), shook off their lethargy and moved towards Kalpi and that the capable and astute Tatya Tope took advantage of their vacillation and assumed their command. Dr. Sen significantly adds : "What actually happened behind the scenes we do not know. Kunwar Singh was also on his way from Banda to Kalpi about the same time. Tatya's agents might have finally influenced the Gwalior men's decision, but still they moved in a slow and hesitant fashion. They were 5,000 strong and had a good train of artillery. On the 9th November they reached Kalpi and placed themselves under Tatya's command."*

In having thus seduced the Gwalior Contingent Tatya Tope had achieved a great political victory. But his aim had only been partially fulfilled because he was not able to bring on his side the Darbar's troops which were in the personal service of the Maharaja Scindhia. Had he succeeded in this part of his mission also, Gwalior would have become a strong nationalist base for operations against Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and other places.

With a large force at his command at Jalaun consisting of the Gwalior men and other levies, Tatya Tope was now in a position to threaten the British base at Kanpur. After making tactical arrangements for the protection of his base at Kalpi where he left 3,000 men and 20 guns, Tatya Tope crossed the Yamuna on November 10, making his way towards Kanpur. But before describing his further movements, the position of the English army in Kanpur should first be reviewed.

DIFFICULT SITUATION OF THE BRITISH FORCE AT KANPUR

Since August, General Havelock had been at Kanpur. He was in difficult straits as his effective force had been reduced to some 700 men only on account of the battles that he had fought and the epidemic of dysentery which had taken a large toll on the troops. However, Kanpur was now strengthened by the arrival of Sir James Outram. This

* Dr. Sen, page 251.

officer had been fighting in Persia. At the time of the mutiny he was recalled, and arrived at Calcutta on July 31. The Government of India decided to place him in charge of the operations against Lucknow which involved a virtual supersession of General Havelock who until now had been holding this duty. Technically, however, this was not a supersession, because Outram was senior to Havelock who had served under him in Persia. Actually, the Government of India meant no supersession, and in order to remove any possibility of a contrary impression, the services of General Havelock were acknowledged by the Commander-in-Chief in a telegram full of the highest praise.

General Outram arrived at Kanpur on September 15, and on the 19th the march towards Lucknow was commenced by Outram and Havelock. The forces under them consisted of about 3,200 men of which some 350 were Sikhs.

The relief of Lucknow was not an easy task because the nationalist forces were there in great strength and full of determination. It became necessary, therefore, for the Commander-in-Chief also to lend his helping hand to these commanders. Sir Colin Campbell, who had earlier seen service in India and had retired on account of some disagreement with Lord Dalhousie, had now been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army by the Home authorities at London. He had arrived at Calcutta on August 13, but took time to organise administrative matters before thinking of leaving Calcutta. Having done that, he reached Kanpur on November 3 on his way to Lucknow.

At Kanpur the Commander-in-Chief became aware of the threat to the town by the Gwalior Contingent which had mobilised at Kalpi. Sir Colin Campbell was in a difficult situation because on the one hand Kanpur was gravely threatened and on the other the British garrison at Lucknow was starving. However, he made his choice in favour of Lucknow as he apprehended that unless relief reached that place urgently, the besieged men at the Residency would fail to hold on further. He, therefore, left Kanpur for Lucknow on November 9 with instructions to General Windham that in case the Gwalior Contingent advanced on Kanpur he was to show the best front he could, but was not to move out of the entrenchment unless compelled by threat of bombardment.

The force at the disposal of General Windham was small consisting only of 500 Europeans and some Sikhs. It was located in an entrenchment which, on the re-occupation of Kanpur, had been prepared by Brigadier Neill on the bank of the Ganga. As the instructions given to him were to act strictly on the defensive, Windham improved the defences of the entrenchment making it as secure as its position and the available time permitted.

NANA SAHEB AND TATYA TOPE TOWARDS KANPUR : DEFEAT OF GENERAL WINDHAM

On November 10, that is the day following the Commander-in-Chief's departure for Lucknow, Tatya Tope crossed the Yamuna and moved to Bhognipur, a tahsil in the Kanpur district. He left 1,200 men and four guns there and advanced by Akbarpur to Sheoli and Sheorajpur, each of which he garrisoned strongly with troops and guns. These arrangements were completed by about the 19th.

General Windham on his part had now received some reinforcements so that his force now totalled 2,400 men. When he heard of the advance of Nana Saheb at the head of the Gwalior Contingent he thought that with his augmented force he was strong enough to disregard the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief. And he did so by moving out of the entrenchment for the purpose of giving a battle. About seven miles from Kanpur an encounter took place on November 26 at the Pandu Nadi. The

loss on both sides was severe. General Windham could not stand the on-slaught of the Gwalior Regiment : he now saw his mistake and gave the order for retreat. The troops retired in good order and encamped on the plain outside Kanpur on the Bithoor road for the night.

On the morning of the next day, the 27th, Tatya Tope brought in his detachments from Sheoli and Sheorajpur and delivered a strong attack. The British force was pressed back and considerable confusion prevailed in its ranks. Windham was compelled to retreat towards the entrenchment while one of the British commanders held an advanced line with the nationalist forces.

The next day* Windham's force was almost surrounded and at the end of five hours' fighting the General ordered a whole-sale retreat into the entrenchment. Much panic and confusion was caused among the flying Europeans on account of the cannonading by Tatya's troops. "The men got out of hand", writes Forbes-Mitchell, "and fled for the fort with a loss of over three hundred,—mostly killed, because the wounded who fell into the hands of the enemy were cut to pieces,—and several guns."** The Rev. Mr. Moore, Chaplain with General Windham's force, has thus described the panic amongst the flying soldiers :

> "The men got quite out of hand and fled pell-mell for the fort. An old Sikh Sardar at the gate tried to stop them, and to form them up in some order, and when they pushed him aside and rushed past him, he lifted up his hands and said, 'You are not the brothers of the men who beat the *Khalsa* army and conquered the Punjab !' The aged Sardar followed the flying men through the fort-gate and patting some of them on the back said, 'don't run, don't be afraid, there is nothing to hurt you'."†

KANPUR IN INDIAN HANDS AGAIN : ARRIVAL OF SIR COLIN CAMPBELL

Thus on November 29, the city of Kanpur was again in the hands of the nationalist forces with the British troops locked up in the fort and in imminent danger of being annihilated. Their desperate situation was, however, providentially saved by the arrival of Sir Colin Campbell at this critical juncture.

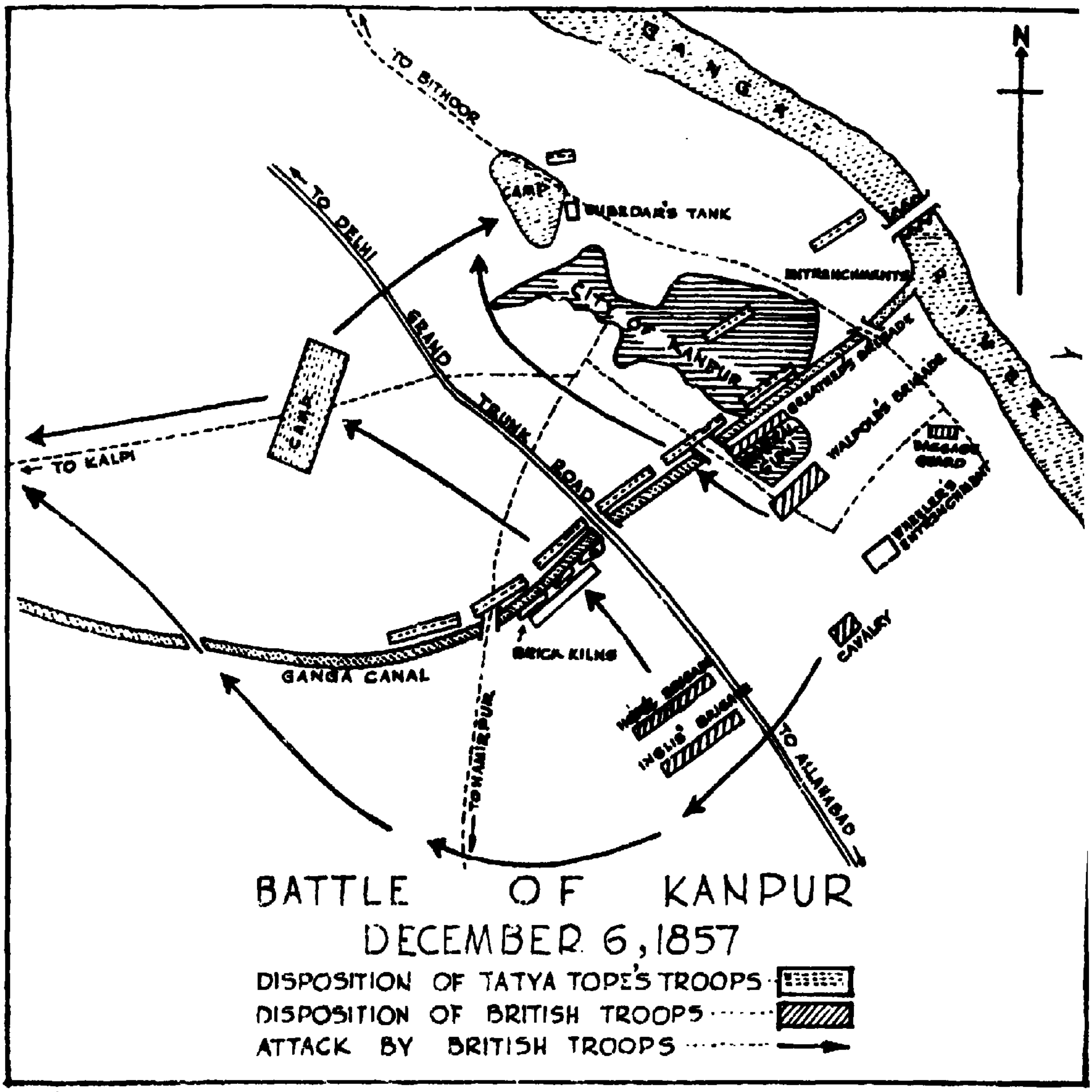
The Commander-in-Chief had succeeded in relieving the Lucknow Residency on November 17 after an operation of four days in which some 500 officers and men were killed and wounded, the Commander-in-Chief himself being amongst the wounded. His first task now was to evacuate the women, the children and the sick from Lucknow and simultaneouly to proceed to Kanpur for the succour of Windham. He accordingly left for Kanpur on the morning of November 27 with a large convoy leaving General Outram at Lucknow, Sir Henry Havelock having died on November 17. The Commander-in-Chief carried with him 3,000 soldiers and his huge convoy covered twelve miles in length.

On his way to Kanpur Sir Colin Campbell heard the roar of cannon from the Kanpur side which convinced him that the Gwalior Contingent was in action. While he was rushing on he received three messages in quick succession from Kanpur for immediate aid—the last one informing him that Windham had been driven into the entrenchment. Leaving his troops and convoy behind the Commander-in-Chief galloped forth with a few members of his staff. He found the bridge of boats at the Ganga still

* Here there is some confusion about the dates and the actions fought, for the account given by Forbes-Mitchell is at some variance with the narrative in the Kanpur Gazetteer.

** Forbes-Mitchell, p. 130.

† Forbes-Mitchell, pages 130-131.



In November 1857, Tatya Tope advanced on Kanpur at the head of the Gwalior Contingent whom he had won over at the cantonment at Morar (Gwalior) and of which he had assumed command. He defeated General Windham who was in charge of the British troops in Kanpur while the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, had proceeded to Lucknow for the relief of the Residency. Windham thereupon took shelter in the entrenchment, and Tatya Tope was once again in the possession of the city. But his success was short-lived for Sir Colin soon returned and defeated the nationalist forces who were taken by surprise while cooking their meals. The plan here shows the disposition of the troops on both sides and the lines of attack by the English Commander-in-Chief.



ACTION IN THE SECOND BATTLE OF KANPUR, DECEMBER 6, 1857

British troops under Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, defeated the Gwalior Contingent and other nationalist forces under Tatya Tope in the second battle of Kanpur. This picture shows the Indian forces flying towards Kalpi, pursued by the English army

in tact and crossing at once to Kanpur he found that the British army was at its last gasp.

On November 29 the troops and the convoy of the women and the sick came into Kanpur and encamped in the Cantonment. The nationalist forces were, however, in the possession of the town and their strength was some 14,000 trained men at least and 40 guns, apart from the swarm of irregulars. Sir Colin Campbell decided not to engage in battle until he had got rid of the non-combatants whom he arranged to despatch to Allahabad and this took the next three days. During this time only a few skirmishes between the outposts took place. On the night of December 3 the convoy of the women, children and the sick which Sir Colin had escorted from Lucknow was now safely on its way to Allahabad. Still the Commander-in-Chief would not move until he became sure that the convoy had got well away from the danger zone.

In the meanwhile Tatya Tope directed a heavy fire against the British Camp and on December 4 attempted to destroy the bridge of boats by burning it by fire rafts. He was too late in this operation for he should have destroyed the bridge before the Commander-in-Chief and his force got into Kanpur. Now, the bridge was well guarded and his attempt failed. Sir Colin Campbell was now free for action and launched an attack on December 6.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF KANPUR LOST

Thus began the second battle of Kanpur between the British forces under the direct command of the Commander-in-Chief, aided by General Sir Hope Grant, and the nationalist forces under the command of Nana Saheb in person who was still the proclaimed Peshwa. With him were Tatya Tope, Bala Saheb (brother to Nana Saheb) and Babu Kunwar Singh, the Rajput Chief of Jagdishpur (Bihar), as divisional commanders. All the Indian officers of the Gwalior Contingent were in their places as brigade and regimental commanders. The Commander-in-Chief had a strength of 5,000 infantry, 600 cavalry and 35 guns. The nationalist troops numbered 5,000 well-disciplined soldiers of the famous Gwalior Contingent, 10,000 sepoys of Nana Saheb from Kanpur, Kalpi and Gwalior.

The action was joined by Sir Colin Campbell himself leading the advance. The Indian forces thereupon opened a tremendous cannonade on the British. The weak point of the nationalist forces was the right which rested on an open plain, the canal forming the only obstacle. Sir Colin accordingly decided to make a drive in that direction and at the same time to cut off their natural line of retreat along the Kalpi road. Tatya Tope's centre was almost invulnerable and his left was also strong . So Sir Colin left these alone and determined to strike on his right separating the Gwalior Contingent from the troops of Nana Saheb and then to destroy them in detail. Numerically, Tatya Tope's force was far greater than the Europeans, but the Nana's men were raw recruits.

The Commander-in-Chief's attack was, however, a surprise one. The nationalist troops "were cooking their breakfast and their chapatis were still heating on the pan when the onslaught was made, and they fled all along the line."* Still a terrific battle was fought. There was first a vigorous artillery duel for some two hours after which a British column advanced to the canal and opened fire on the centre of the national forces. Other British Commanders followed and in the face of terrific fire stormed the position of the nationalist troops and overpowered them.

* Dr. Sen, page 232.

The attack on Tatya Tope's right wing was also successful because by their tactical moves the British commanders prevented assistance being reached to that weak point. The defeat of the Gwalior Contingent was thus assured and their camp and magazines and several guns could be captured. For some time there was hand-to-hand fight in which no quarter was given to either side. But the sepoys were undone and they fled in haste along the Kalpi road. The British cavalry and artillery pursued them for fourteen miles. They were cut down by hundreds wherever they attempted to rally for a stand. In order to facilitate their flight they threw away their arms and accoutrements, for none were spared, "neither the sick man in his weakness nor the strong man in his strength."

Tatya Tope's centre and his left, however, still held the city, but they were practically shut up, their sole line of retreat being the Bithoor road. Having lost his camp, and his strong troops on the right routed, the Indian General regretfully realized that his position was untenable. So under cover of the night he too withdrew. Due to a mistake on the part of one of the British commanders no pursuit was given and Tatya Tope was able to escape with the guns that were still left to him. Nana Saheb with a large party of his followers was also with the retiring men and all reached safely to Bithoor.

By night-fall the battle-field was cleared and a large quantity of ammunition, 32 guns and other fighting material fell into British hands. The killed and wounded on their side numbered a mere 99.

BATTLE OF SARAI GHAT

The next day, December 8, the Commander-in-Chief sent out Brigadier Hope Grant with 2,700 men in pursuit. Arriving at Bithoor he learnt that the sepoys were at Sarai Ghat, a ferry 25 miles above Kanpur. On reaching Sheorajpur the next day he was told that the sepoys were actually trying to cross the Ganga on the right bank so as to pass into Avadh. The men were actually preparing to embark the guns on the boats when Hope Grant came in hot pursuit. His troops rushed through the ploughed fields and opened fire on the boats. The sepoys returned the fire and Indian sawars dashed at the British guns.

In the meanwhile, the British infantry was on the spot and the sepoys could not stand the charge. They made for the boats. The British opened fire on the retiring boats, swamping many of them. Nana Saheb was amongst those who safely landed on the Avadh side. In the stampede that followed a large number of sepoys were killed or drowned. The baggage carts were left behind and so also a number of women and children. The English General took them to a village in the rear where they were left in safety.

The British troops halted at Sarai Ghat for the 11th and 12th December. Provisions were brought to the camp for sale by the villagers who were well-received and honestly paid for the supplies. So, though only small batches of villagers had come in the morning, they later came in by scores with all sorts of provisions, such as butter, milk, eggs and fruit.

The defeat of the Gwalior Contingent was a decisive battle in favour of the British. Previously, they were mostly acting on the defensive. People in general now began to understand that the British were the winning side. Their authority was restored.

On the 13th the troops marched back to Bithoor in order to salvage a large amount of treasure concealed by Nana Saheb in a well in his mansion.

CONSEQUENCES OF DEFEAT : RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF BRITISH AUTHORITY IN KANPUR

The defeat of the Gwalior Contingent was a severe blow to the Indian cause. Tatya

Tope's plan of re-occupying Kanpur and making it a base of his operations was now completely shattered. The British star was now wholly on the ascent. Delhi had been re-captured, Lucknow had been relieved and Kanpur made safe. It now only remained for them to spread out and cover the rest of Northern India with their authority. Yet, Tatya Tope's spirit was unbroken. His army was gone, his guns lost; nevertheless he continued to harass the British army for many more months.

As for Kanpur it was now laid low. The final blow to Nana Saheb and Tatya Tope proclaimed the supremacy of the British and the people who had by now been feeling sick of confusion and uncertainty generally reconciled themselves to British authority. The only exceptions were those who had irretrievably committed themselves against the English and these still held out.

Sherer was now in civil charge of the station as District Magistrate. The tahsils and the thanas were soon re-established with the exception of those at Bhognipur and Sikandra which remained under the influence of the nationalist forces at Kalpi. Much later, towards the end of May 1858, when Kalpi fell, was order restored completely in the southern parganas of the district. There were, however, occasional attacks of sporadic nature until the end of 1858. Thus, in January 1858 expeditions had to be led to Fatehpur, Jahanabad, Bhognipur and Sikandra to meet several parties of mutinous sepoys who were ultimately driven across the Yamuna. Then there was a raid by mutineers from Hamirpur who burned Ghatampur at the end of March but were subsequently expelled. The last of the flying attacks was by Prince Feroz Shah at the end of 1858. These occurrences had, however, only a momentary effect on the people. The ordinary work of administration ran almost smoothly since the capture of the stronghold of Kalpi by Sir Hugh Rose in May 1858.

On the restoration of British rule a general enquiry was ordered by the Government of India to investigate the circumstances of the 'mutiny' at various places and the results of these were published in due course. The enquiry at Kanpur was conducted by Colonel Williams, Commissioner of Police, and Military Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor, North-Western Provinces. But the results were not satisfactory as proper evidence did not come forth although the facts must have been known to innumerable persons.

The Government, however, found it easy to deal with the zamindars who had arisen against their authority, especially those who had taken a prominent part. Thus, the whole estates of the Rajas of Sheorajpur, Sachendi, Binaur and Nar were forfeited. Also forfeited were the lands of the owners of 61 entire villages and portions of 79 others. The Government thus acquired a large property for distribution to loyalists. The chief recipients were :

- Ishri Prasad, the Commissariat contractor, who had brought supplies into General Wheeler's entrenchment at much personal risk and who afterwards rendered great service to the troops; his reward consisted of land in eight villages, then assessed at Rs.7,180 ;
- Nana Narayan Rao of Bithoor who received the village of Binaur assessed at Rs.4,500 ;
- Pandit Amarnath, the tahsildar of Ghazipur in the district of Fatehpur, who saved the treasure and joined Havelock ; he obtained villages assessed at Rs.2,096 ;
- Ishri Dube, the tahsildar of Sheorajpur, who received a similar reward ;
- Pandit Kashi Narayan, deputy collector of Sagar, receiving four villages assessed at Rs.5,000 ;

Pandit Rati Ram Tewari of old Kanpur, a Commissariat contractor, receiving three villages ;

Rajput zamindars who defended Rasulabad in April, 1858, among them being Kunwar Chhatar Singh of the Etawah district, Kinnar Singh, and Chaudhri Lachhman Singh of Mainpuri.

Several other zamindars received minor awards. So also were rewarded certain Indian military officers holding the rank of Subedar or Risaldar.

General Windham's defeat at the hands of Taya Tope has thus been described by a British officer: "You will read the account of the day's fighting with astonishment, for it tells how English troops, with their trophies and their mottoes and their far-famed bravery were repulsed, and how they lost their camp, baggage and position to *the scouted and despised natives of India!* The beaten Firanghies—as the enemy has a right to call them—have retreated to their entrenchment amidst overturned tents, pillaged baggage, men's kits, fleeing camels, elephants and horses and servants. All this is most melancholy and disgraceful."—CHARLES BALL, *The Indian Mutiny*, volume II, page 190.

CHAPTER THIRTY

BITHOOR AGAIN—NANA SAHEB'S TREASURE

A. SALVAGE OF TREASURE.

B. THE SUBEDARS OF BITHOOR.

A. SALVAGE OF TREASURE.

After Nana Saheb had left Bithoor there were rumours that a huge treasure had been left behind by him. There were also speculations about the place where it was hidden. Actually, the treasure had been thrown in one of the wells in the compound of the Peshwa's palace and this was known to some people. The Government also came to know about it through Angoori Tewari, one of their spies.

Sherer writes that many months after the destruction of Nana Saheb's palace, Lieut. Malcolm of the Royal Engineers succeeded in recovering it : "Lieut. Malcolm of the Royal Engineers, with a great deal of trouble, and no small amount of ingenuity, fished out of a large well what was called the Nana's gold plate. This was immensely valuable, because it really was of solid and very pure gold ; but it had no artistic importance of the slightest degree. The trays and bowls were of the rudest shapes that were compatible with the purposes for which they were intended, and, in mean material, would not have attracted attention, if discovered in a South Sea Island".*

The recovery of this treasure was made in December, 1857, when the British troops marched back to Bithoor after defeating Tatya Tope at Sarai Ghat. These troops reached Bithoor on December 13, 1857. With them was the celebrated Sergeant William Forbes-Mitchell, author of the *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny.* He has described how the treasure was seized and the following account has been taken from his book.

Forbes-Mitchell writes that after the rout of Tatya Tope's force at Sarai Ghat, the British troops marched back to Bithoor with the captured guns. "The reason for our return to Bithoor was because spies had reported that the Nana Saheb had concealed a large amount of treasure in a well there near the palace of the ex-Peshwa of Poona" This was a large and deep well in the compound of his palace. It was not an easy job to salvage the treasure from it. Strong frames were erected on the top of the well and large buckets of leather mounted on iron frames, with strong ropes attached, were brought from Kanpur.

The circumference of the well was large and four buckets were run on four separate pulleys mounted on the frame. Twenty-five men were put on each rope, thus making a total of hundred men. The water at first was drawn out in large quantities so as to bring

*Havelock's March, page 167.

its level down to enable the treasure to be hooked and drawn up. After this had been secured, only two buckets were used for draining the water so as to keep the water down and the remaining two were utilized in drawing up the treasure. Each squad of twenty-five men hauling up the buckets was changed at every three hours. The men inside the well who were drawn from the Bengal Sappers and Miners were changed every hour because they had very strenuous work to perform standing in the water.

This operation went on for 12 days from December 15 to 26 and involved an enormous amount of labour, particularly to the sappers who had to lift and sling a number of boxes containing the plate and other valuables in addition to thirty lakhs of rupees in cash.

The treasure salvaged from the well was enormous. Thirty lakhs of rupees in cash had been packed in ammunition boxes and sunk in the well. These were recovered in their entirety. Then there was a very large amount of gold and silver plate and other valuables. There was also a silver *howdah* which belonged to the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao. All these were valued at one crore of rupees. Thus, the British came into the possession of a booty of one crore and thirty lakhs at Bithoor.

In his *Recollections of a Highland Subaltern* (pp. 194-95), Col. Gordon-Alexander has made a mention of the articles taken out of the well. After the level of the water had been lowered some heavy beams were discovered at the bottom. "As soon as these heavy beams of wood were removed", writes the Colonel, "a great quantity of silver plate—solid silver, be it understood—was brought to light, which owing to the action of the water, came up jet black. Among these articles, the State *howdah* of the ex-Peshwa, in solid silver, was fished up, besides quantities of gold plate and other valuables. Below the plate, which was merely deposited loose in the water, as if in a hurry, the sappers came upon an immense number of ammunition boxes tightly packed with native rupees and gold mohurs (each gold coin being worth rupees sixteen at least), the value of the coin alone being reported in camp on December 27, to be over £2,00,000, in addition to the value of gold and silver plate and the ornamental jewellery".

The sappers and miners and the troops who had taken out this huge treasure and worked to the utmost of their capacity in the belief that the treasure would be divided as 'prize' amongst them. A rumour had been circulated that each soldier would receive a thousand rupees. It also appears that the military officer in charge had given some sort of assurance of a handsome payment being made. "But we never got a pie", writes Forbes-Mitchell, adding that a paternal Government ignored the General's assurance on the plea that the men had merely recovered the treasure carried off by the Nana from Kanpur. The plate and jewellery belonging to the ex-Peshwa were also claimed by the Government as State property and the troops got nothing ! The soldiers had even to pay from their own pockets for the replacement of their kits which were taken away by the Gwalior Contingent when they had captured Windham's camp.*

Nana Saheb's property in Varanasi was also confiscated by Government. These properties included a garden situated in Kabir Chaura, five houses in Bhairon Bazar, a mansion in mohalla Garhwasi on Mankarnika Ghat, another house and a temple in Bengali Tola on Chaurasi Ghat and two other houses. Also confiscated was the noted Lakshmanwala mansion which the Government later presented to Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior.†

*Forbes-Mitchell--*Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*. pp.150–53.
†Varanasi Collectorate Basta no. 11, Register of 1860.

B. THE SUBEDARS OF BITHOOR.

Ram Chandra Rao, the ancestor of this family, was a faithful adherent of Peshwa Baji Rao and came with him to settle down at Bithoor in 1818. He was the ex-Peshwa's chief adviser and manager and remained so until his death. He was succeeded by his son, Nana Narain Rao. On succeeding to the ex-Peshwa's estate, Nana Saheb dispensed with his services. This caused bitterness between the two, because as a faithful servant of the late Peshwa, Nana Narain Rao was keen to serve his successor irrespective of the fact that he could not, in view of the lapse of Baji Rao's pension, expect to continue to receive his original emoluments. These ill-feelings became pronounced on the outbreak of the rebellion when Nana Narain Rao was imprisoned by Nana Saheb. It is alleged that he was in danger of losing his life but was somehow saved.

Before the outbreak both Nana Saheb and Nana Narain Rao were on terms of social familiarity with the European residents of Kanpur. They were both commonly known by the short name of *Nana* which is a sobriquet in common use among the Maharashtrians and is used for elderly, respectable people of fame. It was in conformity with this practice, that Narain Rao's name was preceded by the title 'Nana'. This similarity of names gave rise to an erroneous belief that Nana Saheb was frequently to be seen at Kanpur, riding or driving on the Mall, and freely mixing with Europeans. Actually, Nana Saheb avoided coming to Kanpur, although he was profuse in entertaining the English gentry at Bithoor; the reason primarily was that a salute was not given to him on entering the Cantonment. It was the same consideration which weighed with Maharaja Baji Rao in eschewing Kanpur. The real matter was that the person generally known in the town as the *Nana* was not Nana Dhondu Pant, but Nana Narain Rao, the elder son of Subedar Ram Chandra Pant, who, after his master's death, resided at Kanpur.

Nana Narain Rao took no part in the uprising; on the other hand he was helpful when Government's authority was restored. He used to be called by the Magistrate of Kanpur for identifying persons arrested now and then on suspicion of being Nana Saheb and who used to be brought to Kanpur for investigation. On that account, certain writers of Hindi books on the rebellion of 1857, have written harshly about Nana Narain Rao. In the course of his studies, the present author felt doubts whether these writers had been fair to this gentleman. He accordingly wrote to one of the several surviving members of this family, making an inquiry on certain points. The reply which he received from Sri Vyankatesh Vaman Subedar, a young member of this family, and an Advocate at Indore, clears a good deal of the misunderstanding. Extracts from his letter, which is a sincere and straightforward presentation of the case, are given below:

"As you say, authors of certain recently published Hindi books on the events of 1857, have omitted to give correct facts regarding our family and some of them have been even unfair enough to discredit our ancestors without even taking pains to visualise the situation with which they were faced after the end of the rebellion when the Britishers got an upper hand over the rebels at Bithoor.

Fortunately or unfortunately, it was at the time of surrender (or rather truce) that the name of our great grand-father, Nana Narain Rao, comes into the picture in relation to the events of 1857 at Bithoor. You can well imagine that in all kinds of wars and political uprisings a stage precipitates when truce becomes an essential shield for either of the contesting parties. The circumstances are always of delicate significance and there is great latitude for historians to colour the events connected therewith according to their own inclinations. However, the fact remains that it is not the events that precede the truce as the events that follow it that really decide the propriety and expediency of a truce. In the works of reputed authors I have not found anything disgraceful to our great grand-father Nana Narain Rao.

In this short letter I would state that Bithoor would have been completely destroyed but for the efforts of our great grand-father Nana Narain Rao, who approached the General of the British army and boldly told him that it was futile to annihilate the innocent residents

of Bithoor when Nana Saheb Peshwa, whom the British army wanted to arrest, had already crossed the Ganga on his way to Avadh. The Commander of the British army placed trust in our great grand-father and found that Nana Narain Rao was the next man after Nana Saheb Peshwa who had control over the masses of Bithoor and the neighbourhood and that was why our great grand-father was entrusted with the work of administration and control of the remnants of the property of the Peshwa.

Later on, drastic changes were introduced in the policy of the British Government in India and an era of industrial reforms and scientific advancement came upon our country. The intellectual classes were completely won over by the technological progress of the westerners and our people meekly accepted the rule of the British who now proclaimed that the prosperity and progress of the country was their predominant aim.

Our grand-father, Purushottam Rao Tatya, was one of those persons who were greatly impressed by the scientific achievements of the British. He was very keen to get the benefit of the scientific inventions for his brethren at Bithoor. Formerly, the British Government was wholly reluctant to consider any reforms for the town of Bithoor, the centre of the rebellion and the home of Nana Saheb Peshwa. However, he made persistent efforts and pecuniary sacrifice, and ultimately succeeded in getting Bithoor placed on the rail-map of India as early as 1884. The credit for a dispensary equipped with up-to-date medicines and appliances and the linking of Bithoor with the Lower Ganga Canal also goes to our grand-father.

In comparison to the big land-holders of Uttar Pradesh our grand-father was a man of limited means, but he had earned a high reputation in the counsels of the Lieutenant-Governor as well as the Government of India because of his frankness, independent thinking and foresight.

It is not possible in this letter to give a more comprehensive account of the achievements at Bithoor through the untiring efforts of our ancestors, but I hope that what I have written will go a good way in placing our revered ancestors at their rightful places in the history of the great uprising and the events following it."

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

THE UPRISING AT DELHI: EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH

A. DELHI AND ITS EMPEROR.

B. BAHADUR SHAH PROCLAIMED HEAD OF NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT.

C. SIEGE OF DELHI AND ITS RE-CAPTURE.

D. EXTERMINATION OF MALE POPULATION AND SACK OF CITY.

E. INHUMAN MURDER OF EMPEROR'S SONS.

F. THE FATE OF THE EMPEROR.

"Clothed in my burial sheet,
I shall spend my remaining days,
In the seclusion of some garden."

—EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH *

A. DELHI AND ITS EMPEROR.

The decline of the Moghal empire had begun with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. Bahadur Shah I, Jahandar Shah and Farrukhsiyar followed in quick succession. The murdered Farrukhsiyar was, in 1719, succeeded by Mohammad Shah after three princes of the royal family had sat on the throne for a few months one after the other. During Mohammad Shah's reign (1719—48) the Marathas planted their standard in Delhi and played an important part in the history of India. In 1739 the city was plundered by Nadir Shah with slaughter and rapine on an unprecedented scale involving between 1,20,000 to 1,50,000 victims. After 58 days he left Delhi carrying with him treasure worth some ten crores and other property valued at several crores, besides the celebrated Peacock throne. Mohammad Shah was followed by two rulers before the succession passed to Alamgir II (Aurangzeb having been styled as Alamgir I) in 1754, the last real emperor who was assassinated in 1759.

Since Nadir Shah's invasion, the gradual collapse of the empire had begun to take place under the repeated blows dealt with

*The Emperor was a poet and he had uttered this prophetic muse in desperation during the siege of Delhi little knowing what fate had in store for him. Though he was the Head of Government, the forces under him indulged in excesses against the citizens, and unable to prevent them, he had begun to think of abdicating and going to Mecca. It was during this period of despondency that he composed these lines. This is an English rendering of the original.

by Ahmad Shah Durrani on the one hand and the Marathas on the other. Before the final disruption of the empire in 1760 the city of Delhi was devastated by a civil war with daily combats in the streets for six months and was twice sacked by the Durrani (or Abdali) when the horrors of Nadir Shah were repeated.

On the murder of Alamgir II, a period of unexampled confusion prevailed. Shah Alam had now become the Emperor (1759), but due to the intrigues of his Wazir, the empty sovereign moved from place to place, an exile from Delhi. The city was again a prey to the Durrani. At last the Marathas restored Shah Alam to his capital in 1771. In an effort to shake off Maratha influence he was utterly defeated, and in 1788 the royal palace was permanently occupied by a Maratha garrison and the King remained a mere cypher in the hands of the Scindhia. This was until 1803 when the Marathas were defeated at Delhi by Lord Lake and the British took the puppet King under their protection and made him their pensioner. Henceforth the empire of Delhi, which had shrunk merely to a small district round Delhi by the year 1760, was confined merely to the palace of the Emperor, the city together with the Delhi territory having passed under British administration.

Shah Alam was, in 1806, succeeded by his son, Akbar II, who held the title of Emperor till 1837 when Bahadur Shah II, who was destined to play an important part in 1857 and to make the line of Babar extinct, came in to occupy the palace. For 53 years, since 1803-4 under the protection of the British, the remnants of the Moghals enjoyed the long immunity from war and blood-shed and there occurred nothing at Delhi to disturb its monotony of peace and prosperity. The calm was now to be violently broken by the stormy events of the war of Indian independence.

B. BAHADUR SHAH PROCLAIMED HEAD OF NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT.

Bahadur Shah was only a titular Emperor and his authority did not extend beyond the Red Fort in which he lived. He was receiving a pension of Rs. 1,00,000 per annum from the East India Company. Even so, he enjoyed certain privileges of a sovereign. The Governor-General whenever he passed through Delhi used to wait bare-footed and bare-headed before the Emperor's throne, humbly enquiring about his health and dutifully presenting *nazars* to the Emperor whom he used to call reverently "the Ruler of the Universe". This custom had, however, been stopped a long time before the mutiny.

During the early part of 1857 an uneasy presentiment is said to have prevailed among all classes of society in Delhi. There was also a vague feeling of excitement in reference to some unexpected event—a feeling which was again said to have been eagerly fomented by intrigues in the palace. The exaggerated reports of the Persian war in which the British were then engaged added to the general excitement. At last the storm burst on May 11.

In Chapter 17, an account of the mutiny at Meerut has already been given. It was there stated that after rising in revolt, the Meerut sepoys marched to Delhi. Their number was 2,000 strong. After marching all the night between May 10 and 11, they reached Delhi, a distance of about 32 miles, in the morning of May 11. During the march, the sepoys had split into two portions. The advance party of the rebel army entered Delhi through the Kashmir Gate.* This

*Delhi was a walled city with many gates.

party consisted of cavalry-men who galloped towards the Fort. The Company's army at Delhi also then rose against their officers and killed them. The first one to be killed was Colonel Ripley who met his death in trying to pacify his sepoys.

The rear party of Meerut consisting of infantry entered the city by the Calcutta Gate. They then set fire to the bungalows of the English in Daryaganj. Many were burned in the blazing buildings and those who tried to escape were put to the sword.

The sepoys and the town people then began to enter the Royal Palace in the Fort, the residence of the Emperor. They were shouting victory to the Emperor. In the Palace, the rebels killed several Englishmen who were residing in the fort or had come there. Amongst those killed were Mr. Frazer, the Commissioner, and Mr. Hutchinson, the Collector.

The cavalry then pitched their quarters in the Palace and the sepoys retired to the Dewan-e-Khas of the Fort.

A conference between the leaders of the sepoys and the Emperor and Queen Zeenat Mahal was held to decide the further plan of action. It was realized that there was now no point in waiting until May 31. Eventually, the Emperor decided to take the side of the revolutionaries. In the meanwhile, a large part of the Indian artillery at Meerut had also arrived at Delhi. A royal salute of 21 guns was fired in honour of the Emperor. A leader of the sepoys then made the following submission to the Emperor :

Leader of sepoys—Khavind ! The English are defeated at Meerut ; Delhi is in our hands and all the sepoys and others from Peshawar up to Calcutta are awaiting your orders. The whole of Hindustan has arisen to break the chains of India's slavery and to acquire their God-given independence. At this time take up the flag of liberty in your hands so that the warriors may assemble to fight under it ! Hindustan has begun to fight to get back Swaraj and if you accept the leadership, we will drown all these *firangi* demons in the ocean or give them as food to the vultures. (Charles Ball, *Indian Mutiny*, volume I, page 74).

Emperor—I have no treasury and you will get no pay.

Leader of the sepoys—We will loot the English treasuries all over India and lay them at your feet (Metcalfe).

The unwilling Emperor at last declared that he would accept the leadership of the revolution. Thereupon the sepoys and the crowd applauded the royal decision.

What part the royal princes, Mirza Moghal, Mirza Khizr Sultan (sons) and Mirza Abu Bakr (grandson of the King) played in persuading the aged Emperor is not known ; it can only be surmised that in their ardent desire to restore the glory of their house they were keen to seize this opportunity which had come in their way.

As regards Queen Zeenat Mahal it has been suggested that she played an important part in sowing the seeds of the rebellion and that she it was who persuaded the peace-loving monarch to take the side of the rebels and accept their leadership. The last secret meeting at which the mutiny had been finally planned was attended, it is said, by at least 24 Indian rulers. This meeting had been held under the patronage of Begum Zeenat Mahal. It was then decided that the rising should take place simultaneously all over India on May 31, 1857. It has also been held that the emblem of the rebellion, namely the white lotus and the chapati, was designed by the Queen herself. This emblem was carried from regiment to regiment, from one village to the other, as the symbol of allegiance to the national cause.

So whatever may have been the proceedings behind the scenes, the wavering Bahadur

Shah was obliged to dismount the fence by night-fall and cast his lot for war. And Dr. Sen records that "at midnight, twenty-one salvoes announced that the descendant of Babar had assumed the reins of the empire."*

In the city, hundreds of citizens took up whatever arms they could get and went about the streets killing stray Englishmen. At noon they surrounded the Bank of Delhi† and killed Mr. Beresford, the Manager, and his family. Later, they killed all the Christian workers in the printing offices of the Delhi Gazette.

The mutineers also attacked the British arsenal situated near the palace. The arsenal contained over 9 lakh cartridges, some 8,000 rifles and guns. It was in charge of nine Europeans and some Indians. The Indians having soon joined the revolutionaries, only the Europeans remained to protect it. The sepoys continued their assault even though they feared that if the defenders blew up the arsenal, many sepoys would be killed. This is actually what happened because the protecting party having lost all hope of preventing its capture blew it up. Of the nine Englishmen three perished in the explosion.‡ About 300 sepoys in the neighbouring streets were also killed. The blowing up of the magazine was a most gallant act on the part of the English soldiers who preferred death to handing it over to the revolutionaries and surrendering themselves.

The sepoys got a good store of arms in the arsenal and this compensated for the loss of the lives on their side.

The Company's army at Delhi consisted entirely of Indians officered by the British. There were three regiments of infantry, the 38th, the 54th and the 74th, and a battery of artillery, also manned by Indians. They had their quarters in the Cantonment a few miles from the city beyond the ridge overlooking the city at the village of Rajpur where the University is now sited. The 54th were promptly marched down to the main-guard just within the Kashmir Gate, where a detachment of the 38th was posted. In their hearts they had sympathies with the mutineers so when ordered to fire on the insurgents they refused. This was also the condition of the 54th. Several European officers were cut down either by the insurgent troops or by men of their own regiment. Soon after, the artillery officers arrived with their guns whereupon the insurgents and the greater portion of the 54th dispersed. The guns were planted before the main guard whereafter the 74th also arrived under Major Abbott and the whole force remained all day at the main guard, joined from time to time by a few European fugitives who miraculously escaped from the city.

After the blowing up of the magazine the sepoys of the three regiments, both in the Cantonment and at the main-guard, broke into open mutiny. All day long they had been hovering on the brink of mutiny, but were restrained by the fear that white regiments were expected to arrive every moment from Meerut. When the day wore on and no regiments arrived, the sepoys began a massacre at the main-guard by a murderous volley fired into the midst of English officers and fugitives from the city, among whom were several ladies. A few escaped by an embrasure in the city wall, and clambering across the ditch sought refuge in the Cantonment. The women and children were collected on the flag-staff tower on the

*Eighteen Fifty-seven, page 72.

†The bank was mostly British-owned.

‡Lt. Willoughby, their leader, escaped only to die at the hands of the villagers on his way to Meerut. The remaining five received the Victoria Cross.



EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH

It was more by coincidence than by design that Bahadur Shah became the symbolic head of the National Government to whom all other leaders of the revolt owed allegiance. Left to himself, he would have been content to pass his days in the quietude of his palace within the fort. But the sepoys wanted a leader and would not let him alone.



QUEEN ZEENAT MAHAL

A woman of extraordinary intelligence, she is said to have taken a prominent part in the planning of the revolt. The emblem of the rebellion, the white lotus and the *chapati*, was the product of her brain. She also succeeded in persuading the wavering Emperor to assume the leadership of the sepoys and the nation.

GENERAL BAKHT KHAN

Hailing from Bareilly Bakht Khan marched with his brigade to Delhi where Emperor Bahadur Shah made him Commander-in-Chief of the nationalist forces in supersession of Prince Mirza Moghal his own son. On the defeat of the nationalist forces Bakht Khan pleaded with the Emperor to accompany the army to Awadh and to continue the fight. But the Emperor, with the weight of years on him, and feeling [illegible] chose the convenient course of placing himself at the mercy of the British Commanders.



summit of the ridge. But as the remaining guns had also by now been seized by the mutinous sepoys the only recourse now was to take to flight in which the surviving European officers joined.

Every vestige of British authority was now stamped out of the Cantonment, as in the morning* it had been stamped out from the city. All through the night and the following days, the fugitives toiled on. To some, kind villagers gave help, others they despoiled. Many perished miserably on the road, or, unable to proceed, fell prey to marauding bands of robbers. The remainder, struggling painfully on, often assisted and sheltered by gentle people, and especially the Jats, at last found a refuge in Karnal and Meerut.†

The Emperor, when he came to know about the killing of Europeans, gave strict orders to stop it. Many Englishmen were thus saved from death and made prisoner in the palace. But the popular fury against the very name of the English was so great that after a few days the Emperor was compelled to turn over the fifty prisoners, who were European and Eurasian residents of Mohalla Daryagunj, to the rebel mob. This was on May 16. They were then taken to an open *maidan* in the fort, with a rope thrown round the whole party so that none could escape, and massacred. The dead bodies were then collected into carts and thrown into the Yamuna.‡

The massacre of the English which had begun on May 11 ended on May 16. Between this period many Europeans fled Delhi as already stated. But the women were neither dishonoured nor harassed, though those included in the party of the 50 prisoners were all killed. This is what Sir William Muir, the then Head of the Intelligence Department at Delhi has written : "However much of cruelty and bloodshed there was, the tales which gave currency of dishonour to ladies were, so far as my observation and enquiries went, devoid of any satisfactory proof". The rumours to which Sir William Muir refers were spread mostly by English missionaries and were to the effect that English women were made to walk naked in the streets of Delhi, that they were outraged openly, that their breasts were cut, that small girls were outraged, and so on. The falsehood of these stories has been admitted by all British historians.

Both Englishmen and Indians were stunned by the news that Delhi had been captured by Indian sepoys. This news travelled like lightning. When it reached the Governor-General at Calcutta, he could hardly believe it. The leaders of the revolution at other places, who had planned for the up-rising to take place on May 31 all over the country, were bewildered too. It was to be now decided whether a general up-rising should at once take place at each and every other military station or whether May 31 should be awaited. By this sudden up-setting of their plans they were, however, left in a state of indecision which was as harmful to the cause of the revolution as it was beneficial to the British who got breathing time to prepare for the worst.

C. SIEGE OF DELHI AND ITS RE-CAPTURE.

General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, received the orders of the Governor-General to proceed to Delhi to re-capture it. The General at that time was at Simla and he

*By 8 o'clock in the morning the mutineers from Meerut were the sole masters of every yard within the city walls except the magazine and the main-guard just within the Kashmiri Gate—*Delhi Gazetteer* (1912), p. 31.

†*Delhi Gazetteer* (1921), pp. 32-33.

‡A sweeper who helped to dispose off the corpses afterwards deposed that there were but five or six men among them ; the rest were women and children—*Delhi Gazetteer*, p. 33.

knew that Delhi could not be re-captured without sufficient preparations. He proceeded to Ambala, the seat of the Army Headquarters then, to make arrangements for the march on Delhi.

After General Anson left Simla there was great uneasiness among the British officers living there during the summer. A rumour was circulated that a Gurkha battalion had also arisen and was proceeding to Simla. English women and children began to run hither and thither. The men were so frightened that in their attempts to escape, they left the women and children behind. The panic, however, subsided because no Gurkhas were there. A similar occurrence had taken place at Calcutta. There the rumour was spread that the regiment of Barrackpur was in arms against the English. As a result, English men, women and children were seen running towards the fort. Some would hide in the corners of their offices leaving their work aside; some booked their passage to England.

On arrival at Ambala General Anson began preparations for making the army ready to march to Delhi, but, as the Indian camp followers and labourers had left their jobs, great difficulty and delay occurred in making the preparations. English officers and soldiers had been habituated to depend entirely on their Indian employees to assist in all sorts of job. Apart from the employees, the civil population also kept themselves aloof and gave no assistance to the British. Thus observes Kaye : "Natives of all classes held aloof waiting and watching the issue of events. From the capitalists to the coolies all shrank alike from rendering assistance to those whose power might be swept away in a day".

In between Ambala and Delhi there lay the Indian States of Patiala, Nabha and Jhind. These used all their strength in favour of the British. In each one of them the messenger of Bahadur Shah, who had brought invitations to them to join him, was killed. They opened their treasuries for the British and with the help of their armies arranged for the safe conduct of the English force to Delhi and even fought against the Delhi revolutionaries. In addition, the rulers of these States tortured and murdered the members of the families of the Punjab sepoys who had left their homes to join the army of the Emperor.

The Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, left Ambala for Delhi on May 25, 1857. His passage was safeguarded by the Maharaja of Patiala who sent sepoys and artillery with his brother to guard the Thaneshwar Road. The Raja of Jhind took up a strong position at Panipat. In this way uninterrupted communication with the Punjab was rendered secure. General Anson, however, was in weak health and the sudden rising of the sepoys and the capture of Delhi had unnerved him. Emaciated by mental and bodily worries he died of cholera on arrival at Karnal on May 27. Sir Henry Barnard thereupon took his place as Commander-in-Chief.

The new Commander-in-Chief, who had lately seen service in the Crimea, was new to India also. With his troops and the European reinforcements which he received from Brigadier Wilson of Meerut who had now joined him, the Commander-in-Chief reached Badli-ki-Sarai, five miles from Delhi, on June 8. There a battle with the rebel army took place. The nationalist troops fought courageously, but the superior generalship of the British won the battle for them. They then pushed forward and occupied the famous Ridge, the low range of hills that form the outer rampart of Delhi. The Ridge faced the north side of the city.

General Barnard's force was too small for an investment being attempted on the city. So he spent many weeks encamping on the Ridge and facing fierce attacks from the nationalist forces. General Barnard died on July 9 and his place was taken by General Reed. He too vacated his post due to illness and

proceeded on leave. The command was now taken by Sir Archdale Wilson.

It was clear to the new Commander-in-Chief that Delhi could not be relieved without additional reinforcements. These came from the Punjab where the Chief Commissioner, Sir John Lawrence, had successfully checked all mutinous tendencies. At the end of July Sir John took counsel with his officers amongst whom was General John Nicholson, then Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. It was then decided that for the greater need of Delhi the troops of the Punjab must, even at a risk to the province itself, be sent to Delhi. On September 6, a relieving army with a heavy siege-train under Nicholson arrived for the assistance of General Wilson. The effective rank and file of all arms now amounted to some 8,700 men of whom 3,300 were Europeans. Acting with them were 2,300 Indians from Kashmir and some hundreds from Jhind.

Although Sir Archdale Wilson was in formal command it was General Nicholson who was to be the leader of the great assault by which the city was eventually to be taken. The siege of Delhi which had gone on for three months was now to terminate with the advance into the city. Until the arrival of the reinforcements from the Punjab, the British force was actually more besieged than besieging, and during July and August desperate encounters had taken place between the opposing forces.

Inside the city, things were in a sorry plight. The King was helpless* although everything was being done in his name and orders were being issued to the zamindars of the district for the collection of revenue. He was only nominally at the head of the affairs and, though treated with reverence, the real power was in the hands of the soldiers. On the petitions presented to him he recorded his signatures or passed short autograph orders.

The mutineers quarrelled among themselves and the Meerut mutineers particularly complained that the Delhi-men had enriched themselves with the plunder of the local treasury while they suffered every privation and want. For non-receipt of little or no regular pay, they recouped themselves by plundering weak but wealthy persons. The bad characters of the town too had their way and there was disorder all over.

The treasury was empty when a large army had to be fed and a war fought. A committee of administration was formed, Mirza Moghal was appointed Commander-in-Chief (later to be replaced by General Bakht Khan) and the other royal princes were invested with high military rank, but they had neither the experience nor the capacity to control indisciplined troops. This was also the case with the nobles who formed the council, so disorder continued. Shops were closed and business was at a standstill. Mounted on an elephant the King went about appealing to the traders and the citizens to resume their occupations, but their fear could not be allayed. "From house to house the unwilling King was distracted by cries and petitions—now from the servants of the murdered Europeans, now from the shopkeepers whose shops had been plundered. Appeals were made to him to repress the plunder and rapine now common throughout the city"—so wrote Munshi Jivan Lal, quoted by Dr. Sen.†

The King did what little he could to restore order. He deprived one of his sons of his military rank on the ground that he had indulged in plundering and had him put under arrest. He also passed orders that

*He had written a letter to the Commissioner, Agra Division, Mr. Harvey, who some years previously had been Commissioner at Delhi, telling him of the outbreak and protesting his helplessness—*Delhi Gazetteer*, pp. 43-44.

†Pages 74-75.

persons indulging in plunder would be hanged even if they were his own sons. He also threatened to abdicate. He is said to have written to the Rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar and Patiala expressing his desire to abdicate in their favour once the foreigners were expelled from the land.

The British commanders on their part were busy making their preparations. When these were completed it was decided to storm the city on the morning of September 14, under the over-all command of General Nicholson. The assaulting troops were divided into four columns each assigned with the task of attacking particular gates and places some of which had a day before been breached by cannon fire. One of these columns suffered a heavy reverse and had to beat a retreat. Two other columns had also to struggle hard because the nationalist troops would not yield an inch without desperate fighting. But the column bearing number 3 which was to blow the Kashmiri Gate and march into the city succeeded in its task after bitter fighting. At last this gate was blown open with a tremendous crash and the British penetrated into the city.

At the end of the day the English forces had occupied a part of the city walls and got a foot-hold within the town, but only at the tremendous loss of some 1,000 men and 66 officers, which meant that about two men out of every nine were killed and wounded. Foremost on the fatal list was John Nicholson himself who was carried to the rear. But he lived long enough to hear of the success of the whole attack and the complete occupation of the capital for he died a lingering death on September 23.

The capture of Delhi was primarily due to the daring and leadership of Nicholson who led his column in person and was the first to mount the ladder and gain the city walls. His death was widely mourned, and has been described thus in the characteristic language of Sir John Kaye: "Thus died John Nicholson, in the prime of his life, amidst a great wail of the universal Camp . . . . Then from city to city, from cantonment to cantonment, went the chequered tidings; Delhi had fallen, the King was captive—but John Nicholson was dead".*

The nationalist forces under General Bakht Khan fought desperately and bravely for six days more within the city walls to defend their remaining positions, but failed to hold them. On September 20, the British entered the Emperor's palace and celebrated their triumph by eating dinner in the Diwan-i-Khas. The city had been evacuated except for a few brave sentries who did not leave their posts at the palace gate. They met a heroic death, with muskets on their shoulder, grim and unmovable.† No one found in the palace was left alive and no one asked for quarters.

The re-conquest of Delhi cost the British over 3,800 men and officers killed, wounded and missing, between May 30 to September 20. This number was exclusive of the Sikhs, Punjabis, Gurkhas and other Indian sepoys who fought on the British side and whose number in killed and wounded could not be correctly computed. That they fought with the greatest bravery and uncommon devotion has been acknowledged by many an English historian. As for the casualties on the side of the nationalist forces, these too were heavy, but have not been computed. Their total strength had been put at 40,000 on the eve of the assault. This is not wide of the mark when it is remembered that Delhi had become the rallying point for all. In particular, it was greatly strengthened by the Bareilly Brigade which, after having mutinied, came over to Delhi.

*Volume III, pages 658 and 660.
†Kaye, volume III, page 638.

And thus was Delhi re-occupied with the help of well-armed and trained British troops commanded by several veteran officers fresh from the battle fields of the Crimea and Persia and aided by heavy guns. But the fight put up by the nationalist troops was so fierce that the British generals were, after the onslaught of September 14, thinking of giving up the battle and retiring to the Ridge to await for a more propitious opportunity on the receipt of additional reinforcements.

Delhi was then under the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces.* On the re-conquest of Delhi, the Local Government published the following announcement in the Agra Gazette Extraordinary of September 30, 1857 : "Mr. E. A. Reade, in charge of the Government of the North-Western Provinces, has the gratification to announce, for general information, the receipt of a despatch, dated 22nd instant, from Colonel Becher, Quarter-Master-General of the Army, reporting the complete re-occupation of the city of Delhi on the 21st *idem*. In anticipation of the orders of the Supreme Government, to whom it belongs to commend this great achievement, a Royal Salute has this day been fired from the ramparts of the Fort for the assurance of loyal subjects of the British Government and the discouragement of its enemies".

D. EXTERMINATION OF MALE POPULATION AND SACK OF CITY.

Thus re-conquered, Delhi remained for some time† under military authority. It was sacked by British soldiers and their Indian allies all of whom mercilessly slaughtered the male population and plundered the people. Writes the *Bombay Telegraph* : "All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot ; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty persons were hiding".

On September 21 the streets were found "deserted and silent, they resembled a city of the dead on which some awful catastrophe had fallen. It was difficult to realize that we were passing through what had been, only a few days before, the abode of thousands of people".‡ In every direction there lay scattered dead bodies of sepoys and citizens which remained lying for several days—the stench from the decaying bodies was said to be unbearable.

About the indiscriminate slaughtering in which the British army mercilessly indulged, the poet Ghalib, who was there at the time, has painfully recorded in his *Dastambu* : "God alone knows the number of persons who were hanged. The victorious army entered the city along the main road. Whomsoever they met on the way was killed. The white men on their entry started killing helpless and innocent persons. In two or three mohallas the English both looted the property and killed the people".

That the poet was not writing in poetic exaggeration is borne out by Kaye : "Many who had never struck a blow against us—who had tried to follow their peaceful pursuits—and who had been plundered and buffeted by their own armed countrymen, were pierced

*It was in February, 1858, that the imperial city with the surrounding territory was transferred to the Local Government of the Punjab, which was turned into a Lieutenant-Governorship, a post held by Sir John Lawrence. The recognition of the services of Sir John in the recovery of Delhi was one of the reasons for the transfer.

†It was not until January, 1858 that the city was made over to the civil authorities and not until July following that the civil courts were re-opened

‡*Siege of Delhi* by C. J. Griffiths, p. 199.

by our bayonets, or cloven by our sabres or brained by our muskets or rifles".* The historian goes on : "Some of the best and bravest of our officers sanctioned, if they did not take part in, these outrages ; and it is doubtful whether they could have controlled the excesses of their fighting men, especially when they were maddened by much drink".†

Space permits of the mention of but one or two specific instances. In one case a number of villagers were hung because they had been found in possession of some new *pice* and it was rashly supposed that they were participants in the plunder of a neighbouring treasury which had contained new coins also. Afterwards it was found that these copper coins had been paid to them for milk, vegetables and grain by a detachment of British troops themselves. The account of this tragedy was widely current for a long time and Kaye in referring to it has said that, though he has no authentic evidence of the truth of the story, he is relating it as something very like truth.‡

Another case was the slaughter of some 200 men. It happened that some Mazhabi§ Sikh soldiers were killed in a lane of the city. The British troops proceeded to the place and indiscriminately slew many on the spot. Others "against whom blood-proofs, as also relics of our murdered country-women, children, and other Christian residents" were found (on their persons or in their houses) were, following the example of Neill at Kanpur, made "to labour in cleansing our polluted lines before their final punishment".¶

In addition to indiscriminate murder, hundreds were executed after a mere show of summary trial. The Delhi Gazetteer records that the Special Commission appointed for the summary punishment of offenders convicted 2,025 persons, acquitting 1,281. Of the convicts 392 were hanged, 57 sentenced to life imprisonment and many more to shorter terms. But the book adds that these figures do not show all the punishments inflicted and then quotes the official report in which it was said : "It is difficult to analyse all that may have been done during that period of excitement". The Gazetteer further states that "the Delhi district received a lesson which will never be forgotten . . . . the city retained only one-fourth of its former population".‖

Amongst those condemned to be hanged were no less than 21 princes of the Royal family. They too were tried summarily and though there were doubts about the evidence produced the verdict against them was pronounced simply because they belonged to the family of the ex-Emperor. They were hanged the same day.

When Indian life was so cheaply taken, it is no wonder that property should have been seized on a mass scale without the least scruples. Systematic plunder continued for many days. In the temples idols were removed and their pedestals broken in search of hidden treasure. In deserted houses the floors were dug and the walls broken for the same purpose.

An Assistant Surgeon had written in a report that the houses were desolate and plundered, that the plunder daily being found in the city was more than enormous, it was almost incredible, and that every officer present at the siege was able to retire from service at

*Kaye, volume III, page 636.

†*Ibid.*

‡Volume III, p. 638, foot-note.

§Harijans amongst the Hindus taking to Sikh religion are known by this name.

¶Kaye, volume III, p. 637.

‖Page 46. Though the Gazetteer does not specifically say so, the reduced figure of population apparently takes into account the people who had deserted the dreaded city and those who were forcibly expelled.

once. This was no exaggeration for there were many proved cases in which the ill-gotten gains of the officers were of the order of two lakhs of rupees. The number of those who collected Rs.10,000 or so was very great. So a large number of men got their discharge from the Company's army at the earliest possible opportunity and returned to England with the booty. There they sold the plundered jewels and ornaments to the jewellers who exhibited them in their windows for re-sale.

Apart from the plunder done by the soldiers and the officers, the military authorities collected from the inhabitants prize money amounting to about 35½ lakhs of rupees.

Owing to the murder of some European officers who had straggled from the lines, almost the whole population was expelled from the city, because the military authorities, who were in charge, pleaded their inability to make security arrangements on account of shortage of men. These persons, driven with their women and children from their hearth and home, lived in great misery crowded in hovels in the villages near Delhi without change of clothes and without shelter. All the gates of the city, except two, were closed to prevent men coming back—the Kashmir Gate was kept open for the entry and the Lahore Gate for the exit. Later, the order of expulsion was somewhat modified, the Hindus being generally admitted, but Muslims still rigorously excluded. Eventually, persons desiring to return were admitted on payment of a fine equal to 25 per cent. of the value of their immovable property with a rebate of 15 per cent. on the calculated amount in the case of Hindus. Still, the misery of these men made them come back to their bare walls and empty houses for all their movable property was gone.

The extreme distress of these people was later admitted in an official letter which stated: "The policy of the Military authorities has, it is too evident, occasioned a vast amount of misery and distress indiscriminately among the innocent ; even among those who suffered bitterly from the Mutineer reign at Delhi".*

With carnage all round, there was one relieving feature of the calamity—the women-folk were not dishonoured or harassed. Sir John Kaye has been able to aver that from the mass of documents he had before him for writing his famous history he could "clearly derive the one gratifying fact that the women and children were almost uniformly respected. A stray shot might now and then have inadvertently carried death with it, but no intentional outrages were committed".†

Of the many proofs of forbearance which the noted historian had before him he has quoted one as a sample. The European troops had, after the general assault, taken possession of a large house, the basement and court of which were filled with women and children of respectable families, who were much frightened and naturally so. But the soldiers treated them as if they had been their own sisters and passed them out carefully and kindly on their way to the Kashmir Gate which was all that could be done for them at the moment.

Many women had, however, thrown themselves into wells (as had been the case in Jhansi) for fear of being molested by the soldiery. A number of wells thus got filled with their dead bodies. Some of them who jumped later did not die because the water had already been covered. When British officers tried to take them out they shrieked

*Quoted by Dr. Sen, p. 117.

†Kaye, volume III, page 639.

and said that for the sake of God they might be left to their fate, that they were wives and daughters of respectable families and should not be molested but shot straightway.

E. INHUMAN MURDER OF EMPEROR'S SONS

On their defeat the nationalist forces made their escape from Delhi and went mostly towards Avadh. The Emperor, with several members of the royal family and a large following, took refuge at Humayun's tomb some miles distant from the city. There, on September 21 he surrendered to Major Hudson, acting under the authority of General Wilson. He was taken to the city as prisoner. Next day, Hudson again went to Humayun's tomb to arrest the Emperor's sons, Mirza Moghal and Mirza Khizr Sultan, and grandson, Mirza Abu Bakr. They tried to obtain an assurance that their lives would be spared, but this was not conceded.

The Princes were taken captive and Major Hudson proceeded with them towards the city. On the way, he forced them to get down from their bullock-chariots and made them strip off their outer garments. Hudson then murdered them in cold blood. He admitted in a letter to his wife that he had deliberately shot each Prince one after another. Hudson had sent to his wife in England a turquoise armlet and signet rings which belonged to these Princes who were deprived of them before they were shot.

It is also on record that the severed heads of these Princes were later sent by Hudson to the Emperor and his Queen as 'presents' from him. Another version is that Hudson himself took them to the Emperor and, presenting the covered tray containing the heads, said that it was the present* from the East India Company which had remained in abeyance for many years. As the cover was lifted the already broken-hearted King was horrified to see the ghastly sight and in a voice of profound anguish uttered the words: 'Mercy of God! the descendants of Taimur used to come in the same manner with reddened faces before their father'.†

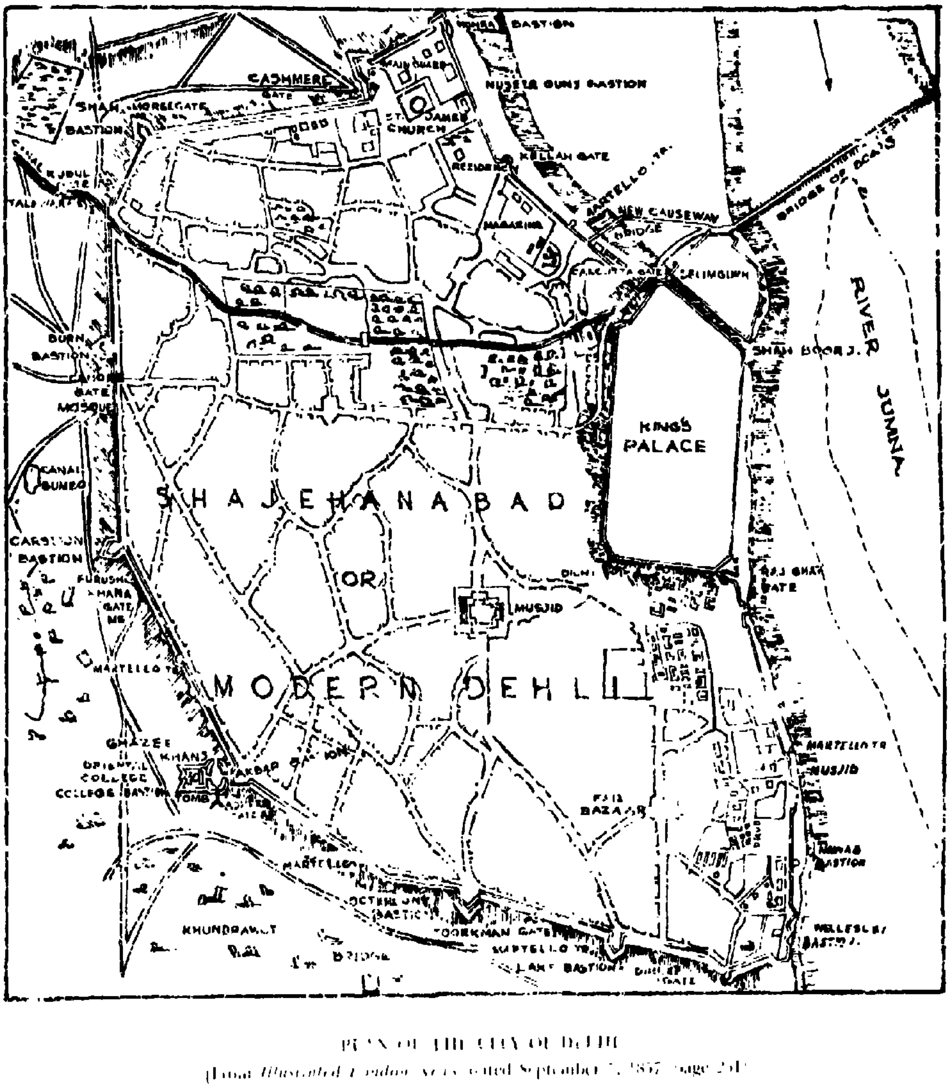
Thereafter, the heads were exhibited for 24 hours in front of the Khooni Gate and the trunks were hung in front of the city Kotwali. The next day they were thrown into the Yamuna.

By his brutal act Hudson blackened the name of Englishmen. Though some of them have tried to find an apology for him by saying that he carried out the execution on account of the fear that the mob which was following might have attempted to rescue them, the more frank and thoughtful writers have condemned him in unequivocal terms. General Hope Grant considered it as "most uncalled for". Historian Malleson has written a long condemnation: "A more brutal or a more unnecessary outrage was never committed. It was a blunder as well as a crime. It is true that the gossip of the camp had accused the princes of the imperial house of having instigated the massacre of our countrymen and countrywomen in the month of May, but not a single item of evidence had been adduced to substantiate the charge. It is quite possible that a fair trial might have cleared them; or had it convicted them, the British public would have enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that they deserved the fate which would then have befallen them. The princes surrendered as prisoners of war. It is idle to say that unless they had been shot they

*The reference is to the *nazar* which the Emperor previously used to receive four times a year from the Company.

†The words spoken in Hindustani were:

अलहम्दोलिल्लाह ! तैमूर की औलाद ऐसे ही सुर्खरू होकर बाप के सामने आया करती थी ।

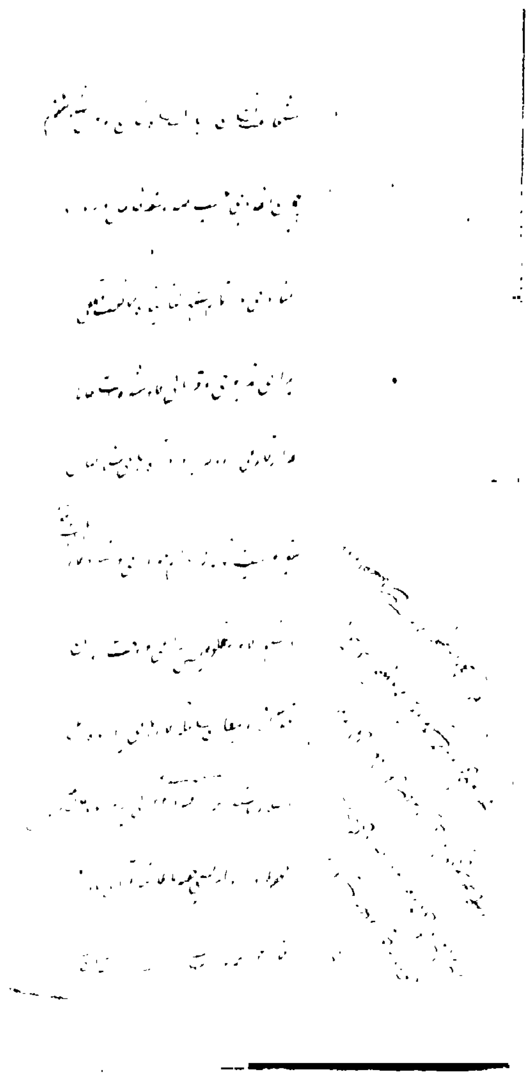


PLAN OF THE CITY OF DELHI

(From *Illustrated London News* dated September [illegible], 1857, page [illegible])

In 18[illegible], Delhi contained [illegible] houses, [illegible] shops, 261 mosques, 181 temples, 1 church and [illegible] schools of all kinds.

The inhabitants consisted of [illegible] Hindus, [illegible] Muslims and [illegible] Christians, total [illegible] — divided almost equally between males and females.



LETTER OF EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH ON PROHIBITION OF COW SACRIFICE

The letter, which is in Persian, is addressed to Mobarak Shah Khan, Kotwal of Delhi. It directs him to make such arrangements as would ensure that no one makes cow sacrifice openly or secretly during Bakrid. It ended with the threat that ruin would come upon him who sacrificed a cow in violation of the imperial order.

would have been rescued. No attempt was made by the crowd to wag a finger on their behalf . . . . It is to be regretted on every ground that he (Hudson) gave way to the prompting of his nature. . . . In the history of the Mutiny there is no more painful episode than that connected with his name on this occasion."

The crime of Hudson grieved the people of England too. Writes Kaye : "And although Hudson at one time believed that the 'whole nation' would rejoice, I may aver without hesitation that the general feeling in England was one of profound grief not unmingled with detestation. I never heard the act approved; I never heard it even defended".*

Khwaja Hasan Nizami, the noted writer and historian of Delhi, has recorded a still more devilish act connected with these murders. It is that after having shot the Princes dead, Hudson cut off their heads and taking their warm blood between the palms of his hands drank it saying that if he did not do so he would go mad. There is no mention of this in the books written by Englishmen, but Khwaja Hasan Nizami in his book *"Delhi kee Jankance"* emphatically asserts that this happening is correct. He says that he had heard about it from hundreds of citizens of Delhi and that in addition one of the favourite associates of Mirza Ilahi Bux (a relation and counsellor of the Emperor), who had seen the occurrence, had narrated it to his (the Khwaja's) father.

F. THE FATE OF THE EMPEROR

When Bahadur Shah had taken refuge in Humayun's Maqbara, his Commander-in-Chief, General Bakht Khan, pleaded with him to leave Delhi and accompany the army to Avadh and continue the fight. On the other hand his near relation, Ilahi Bux, who was in league with the British, advised him to surrender. The old and feeble King listened to the easier alternative and surrendered to Major Hudson† on the condition that his own life and the lives of Jawan Bakht, his youngest son (by Zeenat Mahal), and his (the King's) father-in-law, Ahmad Quli Khan, would be spared. They were then taken back to the city, Queen Zeenat Mahal in one palki with her son Jawan Bakht, and in another the Emperor. They were confined as prisoners in the Red Fort.

The Emperor himself was ill-treated by the British before he was transported to Burma. Mr. Layard, a Member of British Parliament, who visited Delhi at that time, has written thus : "I saw the broken-down old man not in a room but in a miserable cell of his palace lying on a bedstead with nothing to cover but a miserable tattered coverlet. He rose with difficulty from his couch, showed him his arms which were eaten away by disease and by flies partly for want of water. He lamented that he had not enough to eat. Is that the way in which, as Christians, we ought to treat a King ?"

Mr Layard also saw the condition of the women of the Royal family who had all been "huddled up in a corner with their children". He was told that they were allowed only 16 shillings a day for their maintenance.

The famous Sir William Howard Russell, the world's first war correspondent, who visited India in 1857, after reporting the Crimean War for the *"Times"* has made certain observations about Bahadur Shah. He says that the Emperor was no doubt "a

*Kaye, volume III, p. 654.

†He had obtained the permission of General Wilson to negotiate for the King's surrender through Ilahi Bux, but the condition of surrender mentioned to the General was that only the King's own life would be protected.

weak and cruel old man, but to talk of ingratitude on the part of one who saw that all the dominions of his ancestors had gradually been taken from him by force or otherwise till he was left with an empty title, a more empty exchequer and a palace full of penniless princes and princesses of his own blood, is perfectly preposterous".

The King and the Queen were tried before a Military Commission on the charge of encouraging and abetting acts of rebellion and murder.* As for the murders, his defence was that he had sent his eldest son, Mirza Moghal, to rescue the British prisoners, but that he either reached the place too late or that he failed to convince the rebels, and it was thus that the prisoners were slain. This defence was borne out by recorded evidence. The penalty for waging war against the Government with which the King and the Queen were charged was death. But it was brought out that, as a condition of their surrender, Hudson had promised that their lives would be spared. Accordingly, they were not subjected to capital sentence, but were condemned to imprisonment for life. They passed the rest of their unhappy days as State prisoners in Rangoon.

The unlucky ex-monarch did not, however, live long afterwards to count his miserable days. He died in 1862 at the age of eighty-seven.

"I do, without the slightest hesitation, declare my humble disapprobation of persons in high authority announcing that upon the standards of England "VENGEANCE", and not "JUSTICE", should be inscribed."—*Benjamin Disraeli* (Earl of Beaconsfield) Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, 1874—1880.

*One of the charges was of being accessory to "the slaughter of 49 Christians, chiefly women and children, within the palace walls". The trial was held in the Emperor's own Hall of Audience.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

RANI LAXMI BAI AND THE UPRISING AT JHANSI

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U. P. GOVERNMENT HONOURS RANI'S GRANDSON.

ANNEXURE I : "PROCLAMATION FOR JHANSI".

ANNEXURE II : SANAD TO RANI'S GRANDSON.

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके, सूर्य मंडल भेदिनौ,
संयमी योग युक्तो यो, रणेचाभिमुखे हत: ।*

* Two types of persons in the world pierce through the circle of the sun and reach the heaven, namely the yogi with controlled desires and one who dies fighting in the field of battle.

A. EARLY LIFE

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

The history of the world records the life and career of many glorious women who have left behind an immortal name for one reason or the other. There are examples of remarkable women warriors; many have shown their genius in other fields. But no other woman in history has excelled the great Laxmi Bai in valour in the field of battle where she fell fighting in the prime of her youth. And amongst those who laid down their lives in the war of 1857, the Rani stands out as the most illustrious personality. By her heroic death Rani Laxmi Bai kindled the fire of patriotism in every heart and her name is uttered with love and admiration in every Indian home. Even the British have admired her for her courage and fighting talents. Sir Hugh Rose felt no hesitation in describing her as "THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE".

Rani Laxmi Bai was born with the maiden name of Manu Bai at Varanasi on October 21, 1835, in a Maharashtrian family of humble status. Her father, Moro Pant Tambe, was on the personal staff of Chimnaji Appa (brother of the deposed Peshwa Baji Rao), who was passing his days in exile at Varanasi as a pensioner of the British Government. On the death of Chimnaji Appa, Moro Pant, being left without any means of support, moved to Bithoor where Maharaja Baji Rao had settled himself after losing his kingdom in 1818. Baji Rao gave him a place amongst his retinue on a salary of Rs.50 per mensem. At this time Manu Bai was three years of age. Two years later she lost her mother. Her inborn talents soon attracted the notice of the ex-Peshwa who began to bestow his affection upon her. She was brought up in comfortable surroundings and Nana Dhondu Pant and Rao Saheb were amongst her playmates, though much greater in age.

Under the fostering care of Maharaja Baji Rao, Manu Bai was brought up in womanly accomplishments. In addition she learnt horse-riding, the use of the sword and the rifle. Much is not known of her early life at Bithoor, for she remained there only until the age of 14, when she was married to Raja Gangadhar Rao of Jhansi.

The story is often told, and told with authenticity, that on one occasion the boy prince Nana Saheb and some other boys of the Peshwa's family refused to take Manu Bai on a joy ride on the Maharaja's elephant whereupon she began to cry. Her father, who happened to be present, felt aggrieved and in that condition told her in disgust: "You were not born to ride an elephant; now keep quiet." But Manu's stout heart was not to be depressed by these words of taunt, and before leaving the place she shouted at Nana Saheb: "I will show you! for your one elephant, I will have ten; remember my words." These were prophetic words for she did have many elephants, and besides many other things too, when she became the Rani of Jhansi by marriage with Raja Gangadhar Rao.

On account of her good nature and large-heartedness, Manu was liked by all her playmates and young Nana Saheb's refusal to give her a seat in the howdah was not inconsistent with the special affection in which he held her for it is not uncommon among children to tease their play-mates and delight in doing so without meaning offence or harbouring ill-will. But a grown-up man, such as Manu's father was, could not understand the fun of the children and unnecessarily said harsh words to his loving daughter. The affection of these two play-mates continued for life.

MARRIAGE AND WIDOWHOOD

Maharaja Baji Rao, who had already taken upon himself the responsibility for bringing

up Manu Bai, whom he had nicknamed as Chhabili, was now in the look-out for a suitable match for the growing girl about whom her own father was also getting anxious. Baji Rao was desirous of marrying the girl in a prosperous family and this now became possible as Raja Gangadhar Rao, a widower of 40, was anxious to re-marry. At that time Manu Bai was but 14 years. Though there was much diversity in age, Baji Rao approved the offer of Gangadhar Rao for the talented girl was fully qualified for the role of a queen. The marriage was performed at Jhansi with great pomp, the entire expenses having been provided by Maharaja Baji Rao. Many ruling princes were present.

Soon after the marriage, Manu, now Rani Laxmi Bai, began to take interest in the affairs of the State although this was not to the liking of her husband. Further handicaps arose out of the fact that the ruling powers of the Raja were restricted by the British Government who interfered in the administration through a Deputy Political Agent, Captain Dunlop.

With Raja Gangadhar Rao the Rani made a pilgrimage to Allahabad, Varanasi and Gaya in 1850. At every place the Government had arranged for their proper reception.

A son was born to her in 1851, but died three months later to the deep sorrow of all. Gangadhar Rao's heart was broken ; he began to decline in health. The following two years were passed in indifferent health and the feeble ruler could not survive beyond November 21, 1853.

A day before his death, Raja Gangadhar Rao and Laxmi Bai had adopted as a son a child of five years who now bore the name of Damodar Rao. The ceremony of adoption was performed according to the strict injunctions of the Shastras so as to leave no room for doubt about the validity of the adoption.

B. ANNEXATION OF JHANSI

Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, unjustly declined to approve the adoption. Jhansi was incorporated in British India in March 1854 under the DOCTRINE OF LAPSE. The famous words "*Mera Jhansi nahi denge*" were uttered by her when Major Ellis, the Political Officer, communicated to her the Government's decision to take over the principality. Actually, however, she made no resistance to the annexation, and quietly moved from the fort to the palace assigned to her in the city.

Lord Dalhousie sought to support his arbitrary order by the argument which he used in his minute of February 27, 1854 : "There is no heir of the body of the late Raja—there is no heir whatever of any Raja or Subedar of Jhansi with whom the British Government has at any time had relations : the late Raja was never expected by his own people to adopt, and an adoption by the previous Raja, whom the British Government had constituted hereditary chief of Jhansi, was not acknowledged by the British Government. Wherefore it follows that the right to refuse to acknowledge the present adoption by Gangadhar Rao is placed beyond question."

UNJUSTNESS OF THE ANNEXATION

In order to appreciate the invalidity of Lord Dalhousie's action, it would be convenient to refer briefly to the creation of the Jhansi Raj and its subsequent treaties with the British Government.

Bundelkhand had long struggled to maintain its independence against the Emperors of Delhi. Thus the Bundela Chief, Champat Rai, in the later part of the reign of Shah Jahan, asserted his independence, and his son, the famous Chhatrasal, founded a kingdom in the eastern part of the province of Bundelkhand, the ruler of the western part continuing to owe allegiance to Delhi. Raja

Chhatrasal made Panna his capital and held the fort of Kalinjar which has been famous as the most impregnable fort in Indian history. The annual land revenue of Raja Chhatrasal was of the order of one crore of rupees and he had within his territories the celebrated diamond mines of Panna.

On Chhatrasal being attacked by the Nawab of Farrukhabad, Mohammad Khan Bangesh, the former sought the aid of Peshwa Baji Rao I who immediately came to Chhatrasal's rescue and utterly defeated the Bangesh Nawab. In his gratefulness, Raja Chhatrasal assigned a large part of his territory to Baji Rao whom he now began to hold in the relationship of a son, in addition to his two natural-born sons. The donated territories included the district of Jhansi which was governed by Peshwa Baji Rao I and his successors through an officer who was styled as Subedar (or Governor) of Jhansi. Later, the subedarship became hereditary in the family of Raghunath Hari Nevalkar who abdicated in favour of his brother, Sheo Rao Bhao. In 1804, the East India Company, by an agreement made on February 6, entered into a defensive alliance with Sheo Rao Bhao who at the same time continued to be under the suzerainty of the Peshwas of Poona whom he paid a yearly tribute which was to continue to be paid, the British themselves claiming no tribute from the Bhao. This agreement proceeded on the basis that friendship and alliance subsisted between the British Government and the Poona Darbar and that Sheo Rao Bhao was a tributary of the Peshwa. Raja Sheo Rao Bhao undertook not to give protection in his country to any person who was at enmity with the British Government. He also agreed to join the British forces with his army in punishing the disaffected persons in the country adjoining his territory.

Sheo Rao Bhao was succeeded by his grandson Ram Chandra Rao, who entered into a separate engagement with the British in consequence of the fact that now the Peshwa had, by a treaty of June 13, 1817, transferred the principality of Jhansi to the British Government. This transfer of sovereignty necessitated a new engagement which was concluded between the British and Ram Chandra Rao, then a minor, acting under the guardianship of Gopal Rao. Article 2 of this treaty which guaranteed the principality of Jhansi to Raja Ram Chandra Rao, his heirs and successors, ran as follows :

> "The British Government, with a view to confirm the fidelity and attachment of the Government of Jhansi, consents to acknowledge and hereby constitutes Rao Ramchand, his heirs and successors, hereditary rulers of the territory enjoyed by the late Sheo Rao Bhao at the period of the commencement of the British Government, and now in the possession of Rao Ramchand, excepting the Pergunnah of Mote, which being held by the Jhansi Government in mortgage from Raja Bahadur, will continue on its present footing until a settlement of the mortgage takes place between the parties. The British Government further engages to protect the aforesaid territory of Rao Ramchand from the aggression of foreign powers."

By the other articles of the treaty Raja Ram Chandra Rao agreed to submit to the arbitration of the British Government, his disputes with other States and to abide by its award, to maintain no correspondence with foreign States without the consent of the British Government, and to give no asylum to criminals of the British Government. Ram Chandra Rao also agreed to employ his troops, at his own expense, in co-operation with the British Government, on all occasions in which the interests of the two Governments would be mutually concerned. On such occasions the Jhansi troops shall be under the orders and the control of the British commander. Certain other subsidiary terms were also provided for.

On his death in 1835, Ram Chandra Rao, dying issueless, was succeeded by his uncle, Raghunath Rao. The latter also died without any legitimate male issue in 1838. The principality then came into the hands of Gangadhar Rao whose claim was recognised by the British Government in preference to other contestants. He was invested with

ruling powers in 1843. In the intervening period between 1838 and 1843, the State remained under the direct management of the British Government, the reason given being the alleged incompetence of Gangadhar Rao. Before the actual transfer of administration to Raja Gangadhar Rao in 1843, an agreement was signed between him and the British Government on December 27, 1842. This document was formally ratified by the Governor-General on January 20, 1843.

Under this agreement, the State of Jhansi (with the exception of certain territories yielding an annual revenue of Rs.2,27,458 which were to be retained by the East India Company towards one-half of the cost of the Bundelkhand Legion) was to be made over to Raja Gangadhar Rao on January 1, 1843, or as soon thereafter as possible. But the most important provision relevant to the question of succession was that this agreement guaranteed the continuance in force of the former treaties between the Jhansi Chiefs and the British Government, which meant that the clause of the treaty of 1817 quoted earlier was to remain in full force and effect. Thus, according to the agreement of 1842, read with the treaty of 1817, it was not within the competence of the British Government to de-recognise the adoption made by Raja Gangadhar Rao prior to his death. The position may be thus stated:

Article 2 of the treaty of 1817 constituted Raja Ram Chandra Rao, "*his heirs and successors*" as hereditary rulers of the territory of Jhansi. This meant that the British Government were bound to recognise the heirs and successors of Raja Gangadhar Rao *also* as *hereditary* rulers of Jhansi. Now, according to Hindu law, an adopted son is as much an heir and successor as a natural born son. The British Government would have been bound to recognise, as ruler of Jhansi, the natural-born son of Raja Gangadhar Rao born in 1851 had he lived, and so under the rule of Hindu law they were bound to treat any adopted son of the Raja on the same footing as a natural-born son, because the rights of an adopted son are at par with those of a natural son. The non-recognition of the adoption was thus a violation of the solemn engagement made by the British Government with Raja Gangadhar Rao and on this argument the annexation of Jhansi was both illegal and unjustified.

RANI'S REPRESENTATION

Against the order of Lord Dalhousie, the Rani represented her case to the Court of Directors and for this purpose sent her agents to London. The Directors, however, upheld the decision of the Governor-General. In this mission the Rani had to spend some sixty thousand rupees. The Rani's hopes had arisen from the fact that, in the past, the State of Jhansi had all along been friendly and helpful to the British Government. She also lay in some store by the *kharita* which, on the day of the adoption, Raja Gangadhar Rao had placed in the hands of Major Ellis, the Political Agent at Jhansi, in which the dying Raja had requested that "in consideration of my loyalty, the Government should treat this child with kindness. The administration of the State should be vested in my widow during her lifetime as the sovereign of this principality and mother of the child adopted."*

In consequence of the annexation, the Government sanctioned to the Rani a pension of Rs.60,000 per annum and she was permitted to live in the palace in the city. She was exempted from the jurisdiction of British courts and this privilege was also extended to her personal retinue.

As for the adoption, it was allowed to have its effect so far as family treasures and the personal property of Raja Gangadhar Rao were concerned. On that ground, a sum of

*Parasnis, *Jhansi Sansthanchya Maharani Lakshmibai Saheb Hyanchen Charita*, pp. 43-44.

rupees six lakhs which Raja Gangadhar Rao had left in the treasury at the time of his death was held in trust by the Government of India for his adopted son. But certain villages which during the earlier regime had been assigned to the temple of Mahalakshmi, the family deity of the Raja, were resumed by Government. This action caused great distress to the Rani and roused popular feelings against the Government. But a greater offence to the Rani and the people of Jhansi was the introduction of cow-killing which, during the time of the Raja, was never allowed in the town of Jhansi.

It is stated that in protest the Rani declined to receive the pension, but Dr. Sen has held that, after refusal in the first instance, she reconciled herself to her lot and accepted the pension which was found subject to many deductions, including that on account of Raja Gangadhar Rao's debt which she thought was a liability on the State.*

C. MUTINY AT JHANSI

HOW IT OCCURRED

On annexation, the Rani was made to vacate the fort in which she had been living when the Raja was alive. She now moved to the palace assigned to her in the city. Her troops were dismissed and the 12th Infantry of the Bengal Army occupied the fort under the command of Captain Dunlop. Captain Alexander Skene was appointed Political Officer in charge of the district.

The story of the greased cartridges was now prevalent at Jhansi as at other places. The news of the uprising at Meerut and Delhi in May 1857 was received at Jhansi also, but Captain Dunlop saw no sign of disquiet among his sepoys. Trouble, however, started on June 5, on the receipt of a *chit*, brought by some one from Delhi, stating that the whole army of the Bengal Presidency had mutinied and as the Regiment stationed at Jhansi had not done so, the men composing it were outcastes or had lost their faith. How the trouble started has been described in a note of June 6 from Captain Gordon, Deputy Superintendent of Jhansi, to Major Erskine, Commissioner, Saugar Division: "At Skene's request I send you a few lines to tell you that the Wing of the 12th or rather a portion of it have broken out into open mutiny in Cantonment, seized the Star Fort which contains the magazine and all the treasure amounting to about 4½ lakhs of rupees. They have been joined by the Artillery and the only two guns we have here. The following was the way in which they did it. At about 3 p.m. yesterday a lot of the sepoys, having raised a clamour that the Magazine was being attacked by dacoits, made a rush for the place. A number of men, not implicated directly, got in with the mutineers, and at once loaded the guns and put them in position. The good or rather the lukewarm men got out again in the evening, but the Magazine is still held by about 50 men and the two guns. We are in this fix, that none of the men of the Wing, nor, I believe, the Cavalry can be trusted. I could dislodge the mutineers in the Fort with Thakoors, but the first shot would throw all the rest into open mutiny."

Immediately, Skene and Gordon took shelter into the fort along with the European and the Christian families of Jhansi. The Indian servants of European officers did not follow them into the fort, but on the first day they had free access to their masters and their meals were served from outside. Those sepoys who had not yet joined the mutiny slept in the lines on the night between June 5 and 6, and Captain Dunlop was left to entertain hopes that they would keep steady.

* Dr. Sen p. 269

This was, however, not to be, for the next day Bakshish Ali, the Jail Darogha, joined the mutineers with his guards. The sepoys then shot Captain Dunlop and some others. They also killed the two sepoys who had tried to protect a British officer named Taylor. On the 8th, Captain Gordon met his death with a shot through his head which was fired either by the mutineers or by the Captain himself to commit suicide in despair.

In the afternoon of the 8th took place the massacre of European men, women and children in circumstances which are still the subject of debate. According to Dr. Sen, Captain Skene came out of the fort in the afternoon of that day along with the rest of the European party. As the fort had been blockaded and as there were no provisions inside, it was only a question of time how soon the fugitives would yield to hunger. It was in these circumstances that Captain Skene had decided to come out of the fort. But whether he did so on the assurance of a safe conduct on the part of the rebels, or with any terms at all, remains yet to be finally established. Be that as it may, the whole party of men, women and children were put to the sword when they reached Jokhan Bagh where their dead bodies lay exposed for three days, after which they were buried in a common pit. Bakshish Ali, the Jail Darogha, had taken a leading part in this indiscriminate slaughter from which only one woman, with two children, managed to save herself. This lady was Mrs. Mutlow who, while leaving the fort, had put on Indian dress which fitted in her dusky complexion.

Wild stories went about the dishonour said to have been done to the victims. These were, however, set at rest by the inquiry conducted a year later by Sir Robert Hamilton. His findings were: "It nowhere is stated that before death any sort of indignity was offered to any single one of the unfortunate sufferers, and not only is there no evidence, but on the contrary it may be safely asserted that not one of the bodies was afterwards mutilated or ill-treated; unquestionably they were left, on the spot where they fell, exposed; their clothes were doubtless stolen and carried away and the corpses of some (not of all) stript, but nothing more. The exaggerated statements that have appeared in the public prints may confidently be contradicted; what actually occurred was most painful to the relations and friends of the deceased and to humanity, without their feelings being harrowed by monstrous details as contrary to fact as their invention is repugnant to every Christian feeling."*

RANI ASSUMES THE ADMINISTRATION

On June 12, the rebels made for Delhi after extorting a large sum of money from the Rani. Thereafter, she assumed the administration of Jhansi. In her letter to Major Erskine, Commissioner and Agent to the Lieutenant-Governor, Saugar Division, she explained that she was not with the rebels, that she had to pay them money on their threats of violence and that in taking up the responsibility for the administration she had acted in the interests of the people. She invited the Government to send troops for the maintenance of law and order.

Major Erskine had no reason to suspect the sincerity of the Rani's letter. In forwarding it to the Governor-General he added that what the Rani had written agreed with what he had heard from other sources. At the same time, Erskine authorised the Rani "to collect the revenue, to raise police, and to do everything in her power to restore order and that accounts will be settled with her when officers reach Jhansi when she will be liberally dealt with". He also sent her a draft

* Foreign Political Consultations, No. 280, December 30, 1859 (Supp.).

proclamation in the name of the British Government, but to be issued by the Rani herself. By this proclamation all inhabitants of the district were called upon to obey the Rani agreeably to the custom of the British Government. A copy of this proclamation appears as ANNEXURE I to this chapter.

The Governor-General did not entirely agree with Major Erskine, but had no alternative save to approve the arrangement on a conditional basis. The view of the Governor-General was that the Rani, at all events, gave assistance to the mutineers and the rebels, that she gave them guns and men.

In the meanwhile, the Rani had to face troubles from some of her own neighbours. Of these, the rulers of Orchha and Datia greatly harassed her. The army of Orchha held siege of Jhansi for over a month and a half. It was defeated only after the mutinous Gwalior troops came to her rescue. The Raja of Bazpur also helped the Rani in scattering the Orchha army.

In the meantime, the Rani had organised her own army of 14,000 sepoys with 20 guns. She was apprehensive that in the long run the British would not leave her alone and that, when they were in a position to do so, they would displace her. She was led to this conclusion because the British sent her no help—on the other hand the Chiefs of Datia and Orchha, who had harassed her, were professing allegiance to the British. But with all this she was, until January or February, 1858, still prepared to make over Jhansi to the British, should they treat her with honour and kindness.

On January 26 the Rani had sent her vakil to the Commissioner, her idea being that if the vakil was treated kindly she would not fight, but return all the territory; on the contrary if the officers showed displeasure, she would fight to the last. Though her preparations for defence were in full swing, she was, in the month of February 1858, still unwilling to fight. In the middle of March, however, she appears to have been influenced by her advisers who advocated an aggressive policy. They were of the opinion that it was not proper to give up the State which she had recovered.

The Rani was now left with no alternative in face of the British indifference to her good intentions. In fact Lord Canning in a letter of February 11, 1858, addressed from Allahabad to Sir Robert Hamilton had given instructions to the latter that, if the Rani fell into British hands as a result of the attack which Sir Hugh Rose was preparing to make on Jhansi, she should be tried through a special Commission (not by court-martial). For this purpose, Sir Hugh Rose had been separately directed to make over the person of the Rani to Sir Robert. The latter was also directed that the Rani should be sent to Allahabad in case some difficulty was experienced in keeping her prisoner at Jhansi, but before she was so sent a preliminary inquiry in the charges against her should, in any case, be made at Jhansi. It was explained also that she should not come to Allahabad under any doubts about her future treatment. How the Government would treat her would depend on the sentence passed on her. From this it was clear that the Governor-General considered the Rani as a leader of the rebellion—she was also being accused of having had a hand in the massacre of English men, women and children in Jokhan Bagh.

D. THE BRITISH INVEST JHANSI

Sir Hugh Rose was now on his way to Jhansi with the intention of capturing the Rani alive, if possible. On her part the Rani after taking counsel from her advisers was left in no doubt that to submit was to court dishonour—that honour could be saved only

by fighting. On March 20, Sir Hugh Rose, commanding the Central India Field Force, arrived at Simra—one day's march from Jhansi. The following day he invested the town. Some time was spent in studying the defences of the city and the fortress. Eventually, a siege was laid and the attack on Jhansi commenced.

The city and the fort were heavily and efficiently defended. There were at the Rani's disposal 10,000 Bundelas and *valaities* and 1,500 sepoys, including 400 cavalry-men. She had also between 30 and 40 guns. There was determined resistance on the part of the defenders.

For several days, Sir Hugh Rose carried on heavy artillery fire against the city walls.* Much ammunition had been spent in the process and little was left for further operations. Sir Hugh Rose accordingly decided to adopt the operation of 'ESCALADE' which meant scaling the walls with ladders. Preparations were made for this, but the operation had to be stayed due to the approach, from the side of the Betwa, of the army of the Peshwa under the command of Tatya Tope.

TATYA TOPE COMES TO AID

Information had been received by the General that Tatya Tope's main body of the army would, after crossing the Betwa at night, attack him on March 31, or so. This happened as anticipated, for after crossing the Betwa, Tatya Tope took up a position in the order of battle. At night he lit an immense bonfire on a high mound as a signal to the Rani of his arrival. The defenders of Jhansi welcomed him with shouts of joy and salvoes from their batteries.

Sir Hugh Rose was perplexed because on one side there was the force of the Rani in the city and the fort, very considerable in number, and on the other there was the formidable army of Tatya Tope eager for battle. But the General felt confident on account of the high spirit of his soldiers. Several skirmishes were fought in which Tatya Tope suffered reverses. Working on his own formula that "the best way with Indians for making up numerical inferiority is a determined attack on their weak point", Sir Hugh Rose made two attacks which succeeded in throwing the whole of Tatya Tope's first line into confusion and forcing him to retire. Soon after, the retreating troops were scattered in every direction. The soldiers of Tatya Tope had fought with desperation, but were now completely beaten after incessant fighting for 48 hours. The British succeeded in killing 1,500 of them and capturing their artillery, stores and ammunition.

JHANSI FALLS

Sir Hugh Rose now again turned his attention to the city of Jhansi. He had already seen the fighting qualities of the defenders. In a despatch describing the capture of Jhansi he praised the manner in which the defenders served their guns, repaired their defences and re-opened fire from damaged batteries. "The women were seen working", writes Sir Hugh, "in the batteries and carrying ammunition."

The Rani herself, with her attendant ladies, was constantly moving amongst the defenders giving directions and watching the progress of the fight. The escalade†, for which preparations had been made before Tatya Tope had appeared on the scene, was now effected with success. Possession of the city and of the Rani's palace was then taken, but only after bitter fighting. In the palace itself there was much hand-to-hand fighting, particularly with 30 or 40 sawars of the

* At that time the city of Jhansi was four and a half miles in circumference and was surrounded by a fortified wall 6 to 12 feet thick and 16 to 39 feet high, with numerous flanking bastions.

† This is an operation of making entry into a city surrounded by defensive walls, or into a fort, by scaling the walls with the help of ladders.

Rani's body-guard. Sir Hugh Rose has described their bravery by saying that they "defended the stables, firing with match-locks and pistols from the windows and loop-holes, and cutting with their talwars and from behind the doors. When driven in, they retreated behind the houses, still firing or fighting with their swords in both hands, till they were shot or bayoneted, struggling even when dying on the ground to strike again".

The Rani, who till now had been supervising the fighting arrangements and the artillery guns, also took part in actual fighting after the British had forced their way into the town of Jhansi, the fort being still in her hands. She fought at the head of her Afghan soldiers numbering 1,500 who had been in her service for long. Sir Hugh Rose's troops could not stand the onslaught of these fearless men who were cutting down the British soldiers with their swords. They therefore dispersed and began to shoot at the Rani's soldiers from secluded places. She was then in imminent danger of being shot down and would certainly have been killed or captured had not an aged sardar persuaded her to return to the fort.

According to the well-known writer, Sri Vrindaban Lal Varma of Jhansi, the Rani was fighting with two long swords in her two hands, holding the reins of the horse in her mouth. Sri Varma says that after the death of Raja Gangadhar Rao, Rani Laxmi Bai used to practise the art of managing the horse with the reins in her teeth and wielding two swords by her two hands She practised this regularly twice a week in the garden attached to her palace. Sri Varma had heard this account from Turab Ali who was in the Police service of the East India Company and was stationed at Jhansi. He died in 1943 at the age of 115.*

Of the other cases of desperate fighting on the part of the defenders, mention may be made of certain other sawars who had remained in a room which was on fire. Half burnt, with their clothes in flames, they rushed out hacking at their assailants. All of them were eventually killed, but only after inflicting severe casualties on the enemy.

Another case was of a retainer who tried to blow up himself and his wife ; failing in the attempt, he endeavoured to cut her to pieces and then to kill himself. In another case two *valaities,* when attacked, threw a woman who was with them into a well and then jumped down in it themselves.

For two days there was bitter street-fighting even from house to house, from room to room, the defenders fighting like tigers. The non-combatants amongst the population suffered as heavily as the combatants. It is on record that those who could not escape threw their women and babies down the wells and then jumped in themselves.

THE RANI ESCAPES

After the capture of the city, the British were able to take possession of the fortress without difficulty, because the Rani had escaped from the fort on an earlier night. She had let herself down from a turret window and coming down below found a horse waiting for her—it had been brought there with the connivance of an Indian regiment with Sir Hugh Rose. She mounted straightway, placing her little adopted son on the saddle in front of her, and rode off in male attire from the besieged fort in a manner which has no parallel in history.

The Rani was accompanied by a faithful escort of 300 *valaities* and 25 sawars. With her was her father Mama Saheb, but he later got separated from the party when it became scattered. However, the Rani herself with a few sawars proceeded along the Kalpi road in the direction of Bhander where she had originally intended to go. But Mama Saheb

* Tahmankar, page 163.



"THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE"

This picture of the Rani of Jhansi is from her large size portrait published by the Chitrashala Press, Poona. Of the several pictures of the Rani, this is reputed to be the most authentic.

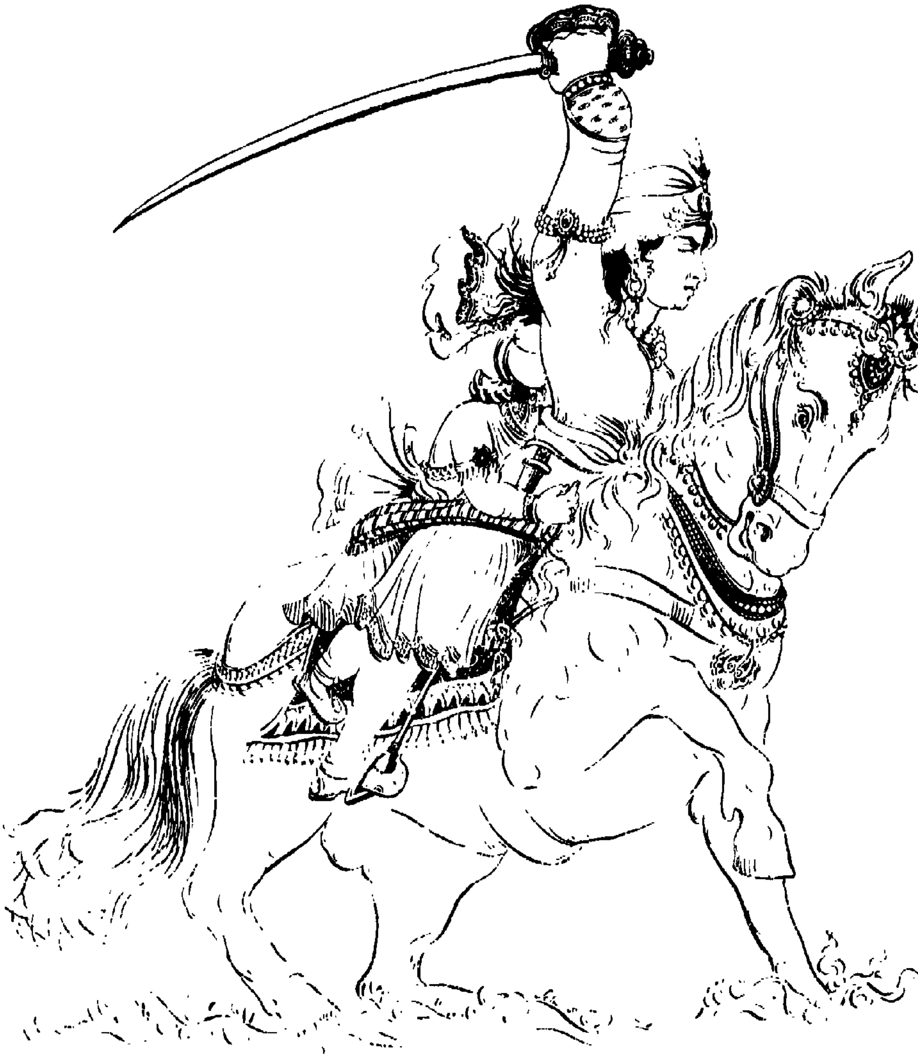
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RAJA GANGADHAR RAO, HUSBAND OF THE RANI

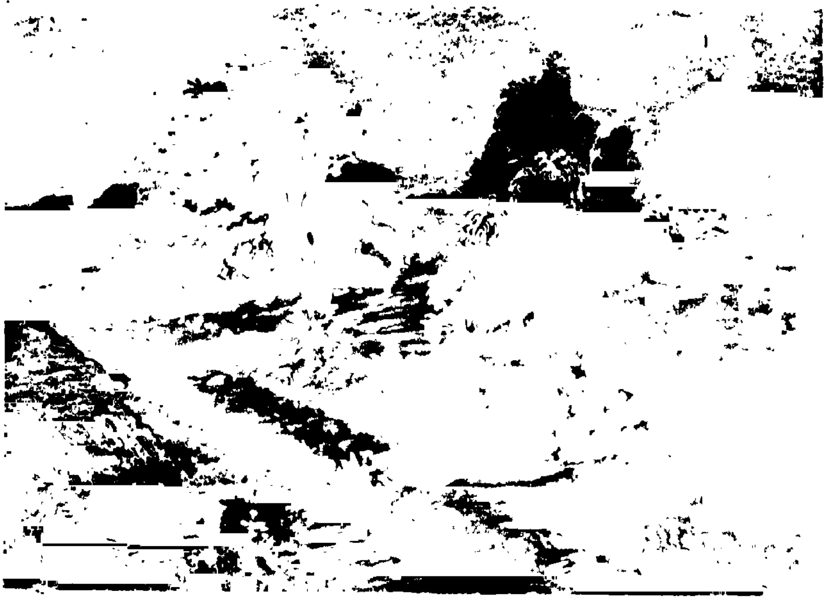
Dying in the fulness of [illegible], Raja Gangadhar Rao had, a day previous to his death, adopted Damodar Rao, a boy of five years, as his son. He had expressed an intention that, during the son's minority, Rani Laxmi Bai should act as his regent. But the British Government ignored the adoption and incorporated the principality of Jhansi in the Company's domains. This [illegible] was [illegible] one and [illegible] and was one of the predisposing causes of the "Mutiny."

\+ +



THE RANI ON HORSE BACK

This is a statue in plaster, standing in the quadrangle of Laxmibai Gymnasium at Jhansi. With her is Damodar Rao her adopted son, whom she carried bound to her back while escaping to Kalpi through the British cordon round the Jhansi Fort. The moulding has been done by Master Rudra Narain the preceptor of the noted revolutionary, Chandra Shekhar Azad.



THE STREAM WHERE THE RANI FELL FIGHTING

Before the Rani was rendered ineffective she had cut more than one assailant. The side of her head and right eye having then received a fatal wound, she was carried bleeding to the *stream* of Baba Ganga Das. There uttering the name of God in a feeble but firm voice the great soul passed into eternity.



RANI LAXMI BAI'S SHRINE, GWALIOR

On the spot where the Rani's pious body was cremated, a simple but dignified monument was raised. It is a consecrated place of national pride and reverence.



RANI MAHAL

RANI LAKSHMI BAI'S PALACE AT JHANSI

After the recapture of Jhansi the Rani's palace came into the possession of the British Government. Until recently, the building was used for the City Kotwali. The Government of India, with the concurrence of the Uttar Pradesh Government, have since decided to declare it as a monument of national importance to be used for a fitting public purpose.

had lost his way and in the morning found himself at the gates of Datia, faint and exhausted. He was immediately arrested and sent to Jhansi where he was tried and hanged at Jokhan Bagh.

The Rani herself had covered 21 miles during the night. In the morning, when her escape became known, Sir Hugh Rose ordered a pursuit. The Rani was halting for a short time at Bhander when the pursuers reached the place. She had to fly hastily leaving an unfinished breakfast behind. The pursuers saw her escaping on a grey horse with four attendants. Forty of the Rani's faithful followers turned back on the pursuers and in the resulting fight were slain to a man.

The pursuers were now in the sight of the Rani, but could not overtake her as she was an excellent rider. The leader of the pursuit party, Lieutenant Dowker, then received a severe wound and fell down from his horse whereupon the pursuit was given up. Who gave him the wound was a point on which Lt. Dowker said nothing in his report.*

Indian writers hold that the wound was inflicted by the Rani herself, in a sword fight at Bhander, the small village where she had stayed for breakfast. As she was about to finish the meal, Dowker with his party came up and attacked her. With her swift action, the Rani gave the Lieutenant a powerful stroke of her sword disabling him so severely that he was thrown off his horse. But for the assistance of his party, he would have been cut up. The Rani then made off with her attendants which included a lady.**

The Rani's flight was a signal for a general retreat. The defenders lost heart and began to leave the town and the fort. Many of them were killed, and "the woods, gardens and roads round the town were strewed with corpses of fugitive rebels". "The rebels, who were chiefly *valaities* and Pathans generally sold their lives as dearly as they could, fighting to the last with their usual dexterity and firmness"—writes Sir Hugh Rose. These fighters as well as the other defenders had inflicted heavy casualties on the British force.

The following passage occurs in Sir Hugh Rose's report† in commendation of the conduct of his troops in the capture of Jhansi : "They had to contend against an enemy more than double their numbers, behind formidable fortifications, who defended themselves afterwards from house to house, in a spacious city, often under the fire of the fort, afterwards in suburbs, and in very difficult ground, outside the walls. The investing cavalry force were day and night for 17 days on arduous duty, the men not taking their clothes off, the horses saddled and briddled up at night. The nature of the defence and the strictness of the investment gave rise to continued and fierce combats ; for the rebels, having no hope, sought to sell their lives as dearly as they could. But the discipline and the gallant spirit of the troops enabled them to overcome difficulties and opposition of every sort, to take the fortified city of Jhansi by storm, subduing the strongest fortress in Central India and killing 5,000 of its rebel garrison."

Sir Hugh Rose concluded his report with these significant remarks about the treatment of women and children by his soldiers : "The Commander-in-Chief will learn with pleasure that the troops under my command treated with great humanity the women and children of Jhansi ; neither the desperate

*His version was this : "I was gaining fast on the Rani, who with four attendants was escaping on a grey horse, when I was dismounted by a severe wound and would have been almost cut in half but that the blow was turned by the revolver on my hip. I was thus obliged to give up the pursuit and the lady escaped for the time being."—*The United Service Magazine*, Vol. LIV, New Series (October 1918–March 19, 1919).

** Tahmankar, page 131.

†Republished in N. W. P. Gazette, dated June 29, 1858 at pages 268 *et seq.*

resistance of the rebels, nor the recollections of Jhansi of last year, could make them forget that in an English soldier's eyes women and children are sacred ; so, far from hurting, the troops were seen sharing their rations with them. I gave orders also that the destitute women and children of Jhansi should be fed out of the prize grain."

Finally, Sir Hugh Rose expressed regret for the considerable loss which the British force had suffered. He added that this was caused by the strict investment which proved so fatal, but that the loss of his force was comparatively much smaller than that of the Rani who lost 50 to 1 British killed, not counting the wounded on the English side.

SACK OF JHANSI

The citizens of Jhansi were subjected to ruthless plunder. The famous library of Sanskrit manuscripts which Raja Gangadhar Rao and the earlier Rajas had built up was totally destroyed. Officers and soldiers went into every house and searched its dark corners, pulling down parts of walls which looked of recent built. The images of gods found in temples received particular attention of the plunderers. They were collected in great numbers and every officer and soldier sought to get one or two pieces. These images were of various metals made with rare workmanship and some were decorated with ornaments of gold and silver. In addition, they also obtained a large booty of jewels. This was in addition to the immense destruction of valuable property in which the victors indulged.*

THE RANI AT KALPI

Another battle.—The Rani now arrived at Kalpi near about midnight after covering a distance of 102 miles on horse-back in the space of 24 hours through rough country and having engaged in desperate fights on the way. For a woman, this was a remarkable feat, remarkable equally as her escape from the Jhansi fort. Her break-through the British cordon round the city has been described by British authors as a marvellous and audacious feat.

At Kalpi she was received at the headquarters of the Peshwa. Kalpi had now become the collecting place of the leaders of the revolt. Rao Saheb of the Peshwa's family with Tatya Tope and the Nawab of Banda were already there.

Sir Hugh Rose now marched on Kalpi, but in the way he had to face an encounter again with Tatya Tope in which the latter was defeated, although he and his troops fought courageously. The rebel army now advanced on the town of Kunch on the Jhansi road to meet the enemy. An action was fought, but the Indians unable to hold on retreated to Kalpi.

At Kalpi a number of bitter actions were fought. The severity of the fighting can be imagined from the fact that the sepoys had taken an oath by the sacred waters of the Yamuna to fight to the last. On May 23, the leaders had been compelled precipitately to evacuate the stronghold of Kalpi. The Governor-General was so much gratified by the fall of Kalpi that he sent to Sir Hugh Rose a telegraphic message of congratulations.

E. GWALIOR.

MAHARAJA SCINDHIA DEFEATED BY RANI

The leaders of the revolt held a representative council to decide their future course of action. Rao Saheb suggested that they should proceed to the Deccan over which his ancestors had ruled and where the name of the Peshwa still carried weight. He thought

* Dr. Sen, page 288, foot-note.

that many of the former chiefs would spontaneously side with him. The leaders, now left with no funds and supplies, were unable to undertake the project, so it was decided that they should first go to Gwalior to woo the support of the Maharaja Scindhia whose predecessors were Sardars of the Peshwa's fore-fathers. The leaders acted accordingly and on June 1 captured Gwalior along with its fort.

It was the Rani who had led the attack on the Scindhia's army consisting of 8,000 men and 24 guns at a place eight miles from Gwalior. She had only 200 cavalry-men whom she led to attack the Maharaja's guns. Scindhia's artillery-men left their guns when they came to know that the Rani was leading the attack. The large army now melted away, many leaving the field, many others fraternizing with the attacking force.

On being defeated the Maharaja took to Agra and found protection with the Lieutenant Governor there. Rao Saheb took over charge of the city in which no looting was done. The civil and military officers of the Maharaja were confirmed in their appointments. Some 20 lakhs of rupees were obtained from the Gwalior treasury and from the house of Diwan Dinkar Rao and one or two others. The major portion of this money went towards the salaries of the troops.

For reasons which are not quite clear, Rao Saheb preferred to stay at Gwalior instead of making for the Deccan according to the original plan. At Gwalior, he tried to conciliate the representatives of the ruling house, but without success.

English commanders were taken completely by surprise when the rebels obtained control of Gwalior. British historians have praised the action as a brilliant coup. Credit for its planning and execution has been variously given to the Rani of Jhansi by some, to Tatya Tope by others.

SIR HUGH ROSE BEFORE GWALIOR

In the meanwhile Sir Hugh Rose was in hot pursuit. After having left Kalpi on June 6, he was now before Gwalior on the 16th. Several battles were fought. "The battle plans were effected mainly under the direction and personal supervision of the Rani who, clad in military attire and attended by a picked and well-armed escort, was constantly in the saddle, ubiquitous and untiring." (*The Times* correspondent writing on August 3, 1858).

The result of these battles went in favour of Sir Hugh Rose. On the 19th he won the battle of Gwalior and captured the fort next day.

THE RANI FALLS FIGHTING

In one of these battles the Rani was mortally wounded by the troops under the command of Brigadier Smith and died shortly afterwards. There are different accounts of her death. According to one version she was killed on the second day of the battle of Gwalior. At the time of receiving the fatal wound she used her sword to the utmost—she fought with her sword valiantly. Later, she was cremated.*

Another account has been given by Sir Robert Hamilton who made an inquiry on the spot. This is his report: "There is a matter connected with the manner in which the Jhansi Baee was killed which is not in accordance with the result of my enquiries at the time and on the spot. The fact that the Rani had been killed was not known to Brigadier Smith's camp until he heard of it by a note from me. It occurred, from all I could ascertain, whilst the Rani with a group in which were the Rao Saheb and Tatya was looking at the advance on the heights early

* Tahmankar, page 168.

in the day. The Ranee was on horseback, and close to her was the female (a Mohamedan long in the family) who seems never to have left her side on any occasion. These two were struck by bullets and fell, the Rani survived about 20 minutes ; she was carried towards Phool Bagh, the Rao Saheb attending her. This event quite upset the Chiefs, and caused the greatest consternation. Arrangements were instantly made for burning the body which was conveyed in a palkee to the bank of the river between the Phool Bagh and the Fort, and from thence, it not being practicable to get the palkee over the enclosure of the garden near a temple, the body was lifted out and carried by the attendants over the enclosure to a spot under some fine large trees where it was burnt. Hardly had the ceremony been performed when the charge of the 8th Hussars came almost up to the garden and temple. Six or seven of the persons who had fled . . . . were said to have been cut down. It was evident that the ceremony had been interrupted, for when I went to the spot Dr. Christison picked up fragments of bones which proved that the usual custom of sifting the ashes had not been performed."*

Yet a third account is that the Rani received the death wound while "fighting at the head of her troops, dressed in a red jacket and trousers, and with a white turban on her head."** She is also said to have been wearing at the time the famous pearl necklace which had been taken from the Scindhia's treasury when the rebel army had captured Gwalior. Tradition has it that this necklace had originally formed part of the Portuguese regalia which had been taken by the Marathas hundreds of years before. It is also stated that after the Rani was mortally wounded she distributed her ornaments to her troops, that the whole army mourned her loss and that her body was burnt with great ceremony by her troops.

RANI'S LAST MOMENTS

The last hours of this gallant lady have been immortalised by the people of Jhansi and Gwalior in ballads and songs. Tahmankar gives the following account of the last moments of the dying queen : "Exhausted by continuous fighting from morning till dusk and now bleeding heavily from the mortal wounds, Rani Laxmi Bai lost consciousness while her few remaining followers watched her helplessly. The Baba† apprehended that the end was near and went to her side to console her. Gently he poured some holy Ganges water in her parched mouth and she opened her eyes for a moment and murmured the name of Damodar, her adopted son. Lovingly she felt him all over and turning to her trusted Sardar, Ramchandra Deshmukh, whispered 'I leave my Damodar in your charge'. These were her last words. She closed her eyes and entered eternity."

Srimati Yamuna Sheorey, granddaughter of the late Chintaman Rao Tambe, brother of the Rani, contributed an article on Rani Laxmi Bai, to the Independence Day Supplement of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, dated August 15, 1957. In it she gave this account of the Rani's last fight and subsequent death:

"June 18 dawned. It was a hot day and the Rani took a cup of lemon juice. She had already donned her red soldier's attire. And so did her men and women soldiers. And the bombardment from the British cannon began. The Rani immediately mounted her steed and plunged into the battle-field. The British Generals were aghast at her daring.

* Dr. Sen, page 295.

** Oswell, page 81.

† Baba Gangadas, a well-known saint of Gwalior.

"Suddenly, the bayonet of a white soldier pierced the lower side of her chest and blood gushed out from her body. She turned round like a wounded lioness and finished the attacker. She saw her dear maid and friend Mundar Bai falling dead by the bullet of another soldier. She struck him by the sword with full force and cut him into two. Another soldier's bullet hit the Rani in the left thigh. She dropped the sword from her left hand to press the wound and with her right hand she hit the assailant who collapsed on the spot. Now only three or four soldiers remained around her. One of them struck the Rani on the head with his sword. The right side of her head was cut and her right eye bulged out bleeding. Still she hit back the soldier and cut out his shoulder. His faithful Pathan Sardar, Gul Mohammad, pounced on the soldier and cut him into pieces and then he turned towards the remaining soldiers with the same murderous intent who then fled away for safety.

"Her followers carried her bleeding to the hut of Baba Gangadas. The Sadhu recognised her and put the holy Ganga water in her mouth. She was heard to mutter *Har Har Mahadeva* and became unconscious. After a while, she regained consciousness and whispered *Om Namo Bhagwate Vasudevaya* (ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय) between her pale lips and passed away into eternal sleep.

"The Sadhu consoled the bitterly weeping Sardars. A funeral was hurriedly made up of dry grass. Dust went into dust. Her wish that her body should not fall into British hands was fulfilled."

F. ESTIMATE OF THE RANI

HER PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

Rani Laxmi Bai has truly been given a place amongst the greatest women in the history of the world. Her valour was unsurpassed; her organising capacity was remarkable. She had the gift of a remarkable intellect and was held in great affection and esteem by the people of Jhansi. She has been described as the Indian 'Joan of Arc', and many legends have grown round her name.

With perhaps one exception, British writers have spoken highly about this great woman. According to Major Malcolm, the Commissioner at Saugar, the Rani bore a very high character and was much respected by every one at Jhansi. Sir Hugh Rose has also praised her in words which have become almost axiomatic; when the General was told of her death, he exclaimed: "The Rani of Jhansi was the bravest and best military leader of the rebels".

The Queen of Jhansi had a magnetic personality, stout body with fair and handsome features. The following is the description of the Rani's person by the well-known barrister, John Lang, who was consulted by her after the annexation: "She was a woman of about the middle size—rather stout, but not too stout. Her face must have been very handsome when she was younger, and even now it had many charms—though according to my idea of beauty, it was too round. The expression also was very good, and very intelligent. The eyes were particularly fine, and the nose very delicately shaped. She was not very fair, though she was far from black. She had no ornaments, strange to say, upon her person, except a pair of gold ear-rings. Her dress was a plain white muslin, so fine in texture, and drawn about her in such a way and so tightly, that the outline of her figure was plainly discernable—and a remarkably fine figure she had. What spoilt her was her voice."*

* John Lang, *Wanderings in India* (London, 1859), pp. 93 94.

During her administration of Jhansi, she showed remarkable capacity for government and organisation. She used to hold regular courts and give quick decisions in civil and criminal cases. She organised a large force of warriors, and trained men and women in physical culture and fighting. She personally used to visit the sick and to comfort them. The citizens of Jhansi felt that Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and purity, had personally come in the shape of the Rani to reign over them and to save the down-trodden India from the British. 'She is good and brave, just and generous and above all pure in mind and body; indeed the holy crusader and the annointed saint,' this is what the people used to say of her in her life-time.

The Rani lived a life of great piety. She rose early and, after ablutions, spent the time in worship and listening to Puranas. After breakfast, she inspected her troops. Then she attended to State business which carried her up to noon. After mid-day meal, she would occasionally have a little rest. In the afternoon she inspected the presents which had been brought in the morning, accepting those which she liked and ordering the rest to be distributed amongst the servants. At about 3 in the afternoon she held darbar. She then wore a male attire consisting of a pyjama, a coat of dark blue colour, a silken turban and an embroidered *dupatta* round her waist with a bejewelled sword hanging by the side. She sat in the darbar behind a curtain, dispensed justice and transacted State business like any big ruler.

In her widowhood she never wore any attractive ornament. The only ornaments on her person were a pair of diamond bangles, a sober pearl necklace and a diamond ring. Her female dress was made up of a spotless white *saree* and a plain white bodice. Her hair were never dressed in the conventional fashion. They were only gathered together at the back of the neck.

Evenings were again devoted to worship. On Tuesdays and Fridays she visited the Mahalakshmi temple, going there in procession. Dinner was served at about nightfall and thereafter she did not come out. Before retiring she passed an hour or so with her three maid servants who remained faithful to her to the last.

Malleson wrote about her: "Whatever her faults in British eyes may have been, her countrymen will ever remember that she was driven by no ill-will into rebellion and that she lived and died for her country."

RANI NOT GUILTY OF JOKHAN BAGH MASSACRE

Lord Canning's Government, however, carried a contrary impression. This was probably because the authorities connected her grievances (against the British) with the revolt of the sepoys at Jhansi. Dr. Sen has ably analysed the circumstances and the evidence in the case and has come to the conclusion that the Rani was unjustly accused of responsibilty for the mutiny at Jhansi and for the murders that followed. The same conclusion has been reached by Tahmankar.

The Rani's innocence was confirmed in 1889 by Mr. Martin, an Englishman who was at Jhansi at the time and who wrote the following letter on August 20 of that year from Agra addressed to the Rani's adopted son, Damodar Rao: "Your poor mother was very unjustly and cruelly dealt with—and no one knows her true case as I do. The poor thing took no part whatever in the massacre of the European residents of Jhansi in June 1857. On the contrary, she supplied them with food for two days after they had gone into the fort—got 100 matchlock men from Kurrura, and sent them to assist us, but after being kept a day in the fort, they were sent away in the evening. She then advised Major Skene and Captain Gordon to fly at once to Datia and place themselves under the Raja's protection, but this even they would not do; and finally they

were all massacred by our own troops—the Police, Jail and *Cas* : *Este*."*

MEMORIALS TO THE RANI

A modest monument had been raised in Gwalior at the place where the Rani's mortal remains were cremated. It is regarded as a consecrated place and is visited by thousands to pay homage to the illustrious lady. After Independence, the Uttar Pradesh Government also erected a memorial to her at Jhansi. It is a bronze statue at the foot of the fort.

Other memorials in bronze or stone also exist. She is also immortalized in sweet and inspiring ballads in which people sing her praise with reverence. But her most effective memorial is to be found in the hearts of her loving countrymen for whom she lived and died.

U. P. GOVERNMENT HONOURS RANI'S GRANDSON

On the occasion of the centenary of 1857 celebrated on May 10, 1957, the Government of Uttar Pradesh granted, in sacred memory of the Rani, a sanad and a monetary award to Sri Laxman Rao Jhansiwala, son of Damodar Rao, the Rani's adopted son. Sri Jhansiwala (died in 1959) came from Indore to Lucknow, on the invitation of Government, to receive the presents from the hands of the Governor at an impressive public ceremony. The sanad given to him is reproduced as ANNEXURE II at the end of this chapter.

Sri Jhansiwala was also given pensions by the Government of India and the Uttar Pradesh Government.

> Every revolution is the black-board upon which shining deeds of valour, unselfishness, and resource show white. It is the strong Personality's opportunity. And the Indian Mutiny was no exception. The brave man felt it as a call to show his mettle; the unselfish man, as the occasion for supreme self-surrender; the man of resource, as his chance to make a possible future out of a black present. -GIBERNE SIEVEKING in *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*.

* Parasnis, p. 125. Martin's letter was actually seen by Parasnis, though it is not now traceable with Damodar Rao's descendants who live at Imli Bazar, Indore.

ANNEXURE I

"PROCLAMATION FOR JHANSI"

Major Erskine, Commissioner, Saugar Division, had, with his letter of July 2, 1857, sent to the Rani the following proclamation, both in Persian and Hindi, with his seal and signature announcing that until further orders the Rani will rule the district in the name of the British Government :

Proclamation for Jhansi—Be it known to all people belonging to. or residing in, the Government District of Jhansi, that owing to the bad conduct of the soldiers some valuable lives have been lost, and property destroyed, but the strong and powerful British Government is sending thousands of European soldiers to places which have been disturbed, and early arrangements will be made to restore order in Jhansi.

Until officers and troops reach Jhansi, the Rani will rule in the name of the British Government and according to the customs of the British Government, and I hereby call on all great and small to obey the Ranee and to pay the Government revenue to her, for which they will receive credit.

The British Army has retaken the city of Delhi and has killed thousands of the rebels, and will hang or shoot all the rebels where-ever they may be found."

ANNEXURE II

SANAD GRANTED BY U. P. GOVERNMENT TO THE GRANDSON OF THE RANI OF JHANSI

स्वतन्त्रता संग्राम शताब्दी, समारोह, १९५७

अट्ठारह सौ सत्तावन के भारतीय स्वातंत्र्य संग्राम की शताब्दी इस वर्ष मनाई जा रही है। उस संग्राम में देश की स्वतंत्रता के लिये अनेकानेक वीर सेनानियों और अन्य देश भक्तों ने भाग लिया और स्वदेश के लिये अपने को बलिदान किया।

इस संग्राम की अग्रगण्य वीरांगना झांसी की महारानी लक्ष्मीबाई की पुण्य स्मृति में उत्तर प्रदेश शासन की ओर से उनके पौत्र श्री लक्ष्मण राव झांसीवाला को १,००१ रुपये, रौप्यथाल तथा कौशाम्बर इत्यादि की सांकेतिक भेंट दी जाती है।

राज्यपाल की आज्ञा से,
आदित्यनाथ झा,
मुख्य सचिव,
उत्तर प्रदेश शासन।

लखनऊ :
२० बैशाख, शक संवत् १८७९,
१० मई, १९५७।

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL OF AVADH: THE UPRISING AT LUCKNOW

A. THE HOUSE OF AVADH.

B. QUEEN HAZRAT MAHAL.

C. THE OUTBREAK.

D. THE SIEGE OF THE RESIDENCY.

E. BIRJIS QADAR PROCLAIMED KING, HAZRAT MAHAL REGENT.

F. THE RE-CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW.

G. THE VALOUR OF INDIAN WOMEN.

H. THE PLUNDERS AND MASSACRES.

I. THE MEMORIAL.

"I have little doubt in my mind that 1856, when Avadh was annexed, marked the beginning of a rebellious mood in the army generally and in the Bengal Army in particular."—MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD IN THE FOREWORD TO DR. SEN'S "EIGHTEEN FIFTY-SEVEN".

A. THE HOUSE OF AVADH

The founder of the ruling dynasty of Avadh was Nawab Saadat Khan, Burhan-ul-Mulk, the Subedar or Governor of Avadh, a province under the Mughal Court of Delhi. On the next page is given the geneology of the House of Avadh to which Queen Hazrat Mahal, who played a prominent part in the uprising at Lucknow, belonged.

GENEOLOGY

(The figures in brackets indicate the year of accession)

SAADAT KHAN, BURHAN-UL-MULK
Subedar of Avadh and founder of Avadh dynasty.
First Nawab (1732)

Safdar Jang (Nephew and son-in-law of First Nawab)
Second Nawab (1739)

Shuja-ud-daula
Third Nawab (1753)

- Asaf-ud-daula (by Bahu Begum)
  Fourth Nawab (1775)
  - Wazir Ali
    Fifth Nawab (1797)
    (Reputed son of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula ; reigned for four months and was deposed in 1798).
- Saadat Ali Khan (by Khurd Mahal)
  Sixth Nawab (1798)
  - Ghazi-ud-din Haider
    First King (1814).
    (Received title of King from the British Government in 1819)
    - Nasir-ud-din Haider
      Second King (1827).
  - Muhammad Ali Shah
    Third King (1837)
    - Amjad Ali Shah
      Fourth King (1842)
      - Wajid Ali Shah
        Fifth King (1847).
        In February, 1856, the British annexed Avadh. Wajid Ali was removed to Calcutta on a monthly pension of one lakh. Died on September 21, 1887.

Burhan-ul-Mulk himself draws his origin from a ruler of the tribe of Turcoman of Asia Minor, by name Kara Mohammad. It was in 1732 that Saadat Khan was appointed by the Emperor of Delhi (Mohammad Shah) as the Governor of Avadh with headquarters at Faizabad. Afterwards, he received the title of Burhan-ul-Mulk and was present at the

battle against Nadir Shah on the day previous to the massacre of Delhi in March, 1739.

On the death of Saadat Khan, the first Nawab of Avadh, the province or Suba passed on to his nephew and son-in-law, Safdar Jung, who became the second Nawab. In 1748, the Emperor Ahmad Shah appointed him as Wazir of the Empire whereupon the office of Nawab began to be known as Nawab-Wazir. Safdar Jung was in 1753 succeeded in the office of Nawab-Wazir by his son, Shuja-ud-daula, who played an important part in the early history of the British people in India. He was present at the second battle of Panipat between the Peshwa of Poona (Balaji Baji Rao) and Ahmad Shah Abdali in 1761. Later, along with the Emperor Shah Alam and Mir Kasim, the Governor of Bengal, he was defeated by the British in the battle of Buxar in 1764. As a result, he had to make a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the Company under which he had to engage for the payment of an annual subsidy for the maintenance of the Company's troops in his territory. But the British were still apprehensive of the designs of the Nawab who had the Emperor completely in his power and so they concluded further treaties with him restricting his troops and territories.*

Shuja-ud-daula died in 1775 leaving his son, Asaf-ud-daula (by Bahu Begum) to succeed him as the fourth Nawab. He shifted the seat of Government from Faizabad to Lucknow. A new treaty was concluded between him and the Company's Government by which, among other things, the monthly payment for the British troops was raised to Rs.2,60,000 for each brigade that crossed his border. He also ceded to the Company all the districts dependent on Raja Chet Singh of Varanasi, including Varanasi, Jaunpur and Ghazipur. In his pecuniary embarrassments, he endeavoured to deprive his grand-mother and Bahu Begum, his own mother, of the property which had been left to them, resulting in a complaint to the Governor-General by Bahu Begum in 1775 that the Nawab had extorted from her a sum of Rs.26,00,000. Later, there was an agreement between Bahu Begum and Asaf-ud-daula by which she was maintained in the enjoyment of her jagirs and property, the British Company guaranteeing the terms of the agreement.

In 1781, Asaf-ud-daula again found a pretext to deprive the ladies of their lands and treasure on the alleged ground of their being implicated in Maharaja Chet Singh's rebellion. In the impeachment of Warren Hastings, who was Governor-General then, one of the allegations was that Warren Hastings had a hand in the objectionable actions of the Nawab with respect to these ladies. There were several treaties between the Company and the Nawab and by one of them, made in 1787, the Nawab was to make a fixed annual payment of Rs.50,00,000 to the Company in lieu of all claims. A large part of the balance said to be due to the British Government was remitted by this transaction.

Nawab Asaf-ud-daula was exceedingly generous, bordering on extravagance. To relieve distress caused by famine he built in 1784 the great Imambara at Lucknow at a cost of a crore of rupees. This large austere building contains the world's largest vaulted roof over the central hall. There are galleries and corridors above, which form complicated and intersected labyrinths. Close to the Imambara he built simultaneously a large and imposing gate-way known as the Rumi Darwaza which is said to be a copy of one of the gates in Constantinople.

*The Nawab's army was not to exceed 35 000 men, none of whom were to be equipped or drilled like English troops.

Asaf-ud-daula died in 1797 to be succeeded by Mirza Ali or Wazir Ali. But the British were not in favour of enthroning him. So, on the ground that his paternity was thought to be spurious, he was deposed after a few months, his place being taken by the eldest surviving son of Shuja-ud-daula and brother of Asaf-ud-daula, who became the sixth Nawab with the title of Saadat Ali.

The new Nawab owed his elevation to the Company with whom he entered into treaties favourable to their interests. Thus, by the treaty of 1801 Saadat Ali ceded to the Company lands in the Doab and the whole of the Rohilkhand yielding an annual revenue of Rs.1,35,25,475 in lieu of the old subsidy. He also agreed to establish in his dominions such a system of administration, to be carried on by his own officers, as was to be conducive to the prosperity of the subjects, and undertook further to act agreeably to the counsel of the officers of the Company. In this way the East India Company stepped into the administration of Avadh making themselves morally responsible for the welfare of the people. At the same time, the Nawab's troops were reduced to four battalions of infantry and one of najibs, 2,000 cavalry and 300 *golandazes*.

At Saadat Ali Khan's death the Nawab-Wazirship passed to his eldest son, Ghaziuddin Haider, in 1814. Five years later, in 1819, the British Government conferred on him the dignity of "King" and thenceforth the Avadh rulers styled themselves as Kings. Although the Nawab-Wazirs were *de facto* independent of the Emperor of Delhi whose power was dwindling, they owed *de jure* allegiance to the Court of Delhi in whose name they had been ruling. This last vestige of connection with the Emperor now came to an end with the assumption of the title of King by Ghaziuddin Haider with the support of the Government of the Company. Thus, the East India Company which had previously depended on the pleasure of the Emperor, became the "king-makers". And the new King little knew that the "king-makers" would themselves become the rulers of his kingdom in the not distant future.

Four kings succeeded King Ghaziuddin Haider, the fifth and last one being Wajid Ali Shah from whose hands the kingdom passed to the East India Company. His first successor was Nasir-ud-din Haider, his son, who became the second King on his death in 1827. Having died childless in 1837, as a result of poisoning by his own family, Nasir-ud-din was succeeded by Muhammad Ali Shah, his uncle, who became the third King at the age of 70. The fourth King was Amjad Ali Shah who succeeded to the Crown in 1842 on the death of Muhammad Ali Shah.

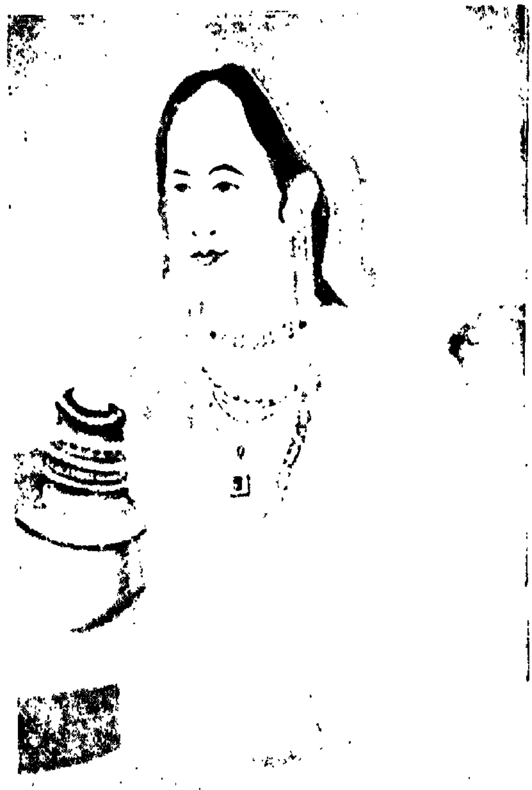
Kings Ghaziuddin Haider, Nasir-ud-din Haider and Muhammad Ali Shah lent large sums of money to the East India Company as perpetual loans bearing interest at fixed rates with the stipulation that the proceeds of the interest were to be applied by the Company's Government in the payment of pensions in perpetuity to stipendiaries specified by the loanee, and the successors of such stipendiaries. These payments, which are known as wasikas, are still being made by the Union Government as successor to the British Government.

Amjad Ali Shah died in February 1847 and was succeeded by his son, Wajid Ali Shah, the fifth and the last King of Avadh.

One of the provisions of the treaty of 1801 between the Company and Nawab Saadat Ali Khan was that the Nawab-Wazir should introduce, under the advice of the British Government, such a system of administration as would be conducive to the prosperity of his subjects and be calculated to secure their lives and property. In 1831 Lord William Bentinck, the Governor-General, had warned King Nasir-ud-din Haider that if he failed to improve the administration, the settlement of the country would be made by British officers. A few months after the accession of Wajid Ali Shah, the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, came to Lucknow

QUEEN HAZRAT MAHAL

[illegible] Queen [illegible] surrender [illegible] pension [illegible] self and her son Prince Birjis Qadr. But [illegible] protection of the British [illegible] the [illegible] Queen [illegible] the [illegible] land [illegible]



PRINCE BIRJIS QADAR

[illegible] capture of Lucknow by the [illegible] Birj[is] [illegible] proclaimed Wali [illegible] [illegible] regency of his mother Queen Haz[rat] [illegible] Prince found [illegible] asylum in Nep[al] with his mother.

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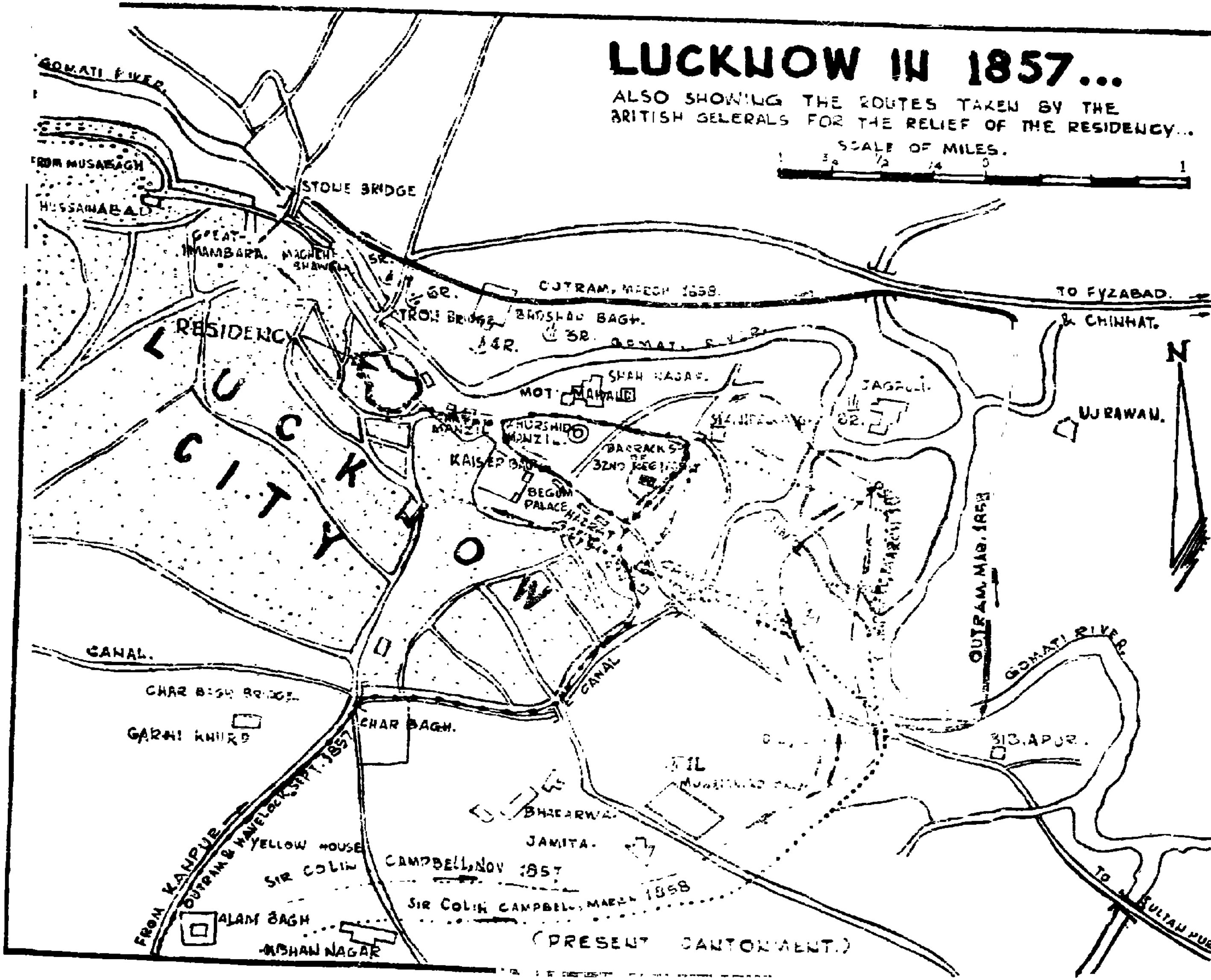


THE RESIDENCY, LUCKNOW

This was built by Nawab Sadat Ali Khan for the accommodation of the British Resident at his Court. It was in one [illegible] on a little mound some 300 yards from the Gomati. [illegible] buildings on the campus [illegible]

At the first signs of [illegible] the Chief Commissioner of Avadh prepared it as a place of protection stocked with provision of all kinds. After their defeat at the battle of Chinhat at the end of June 1857 the English took shelter in the Residency which was then besieged. After a long siege the inmates were relieved by Sir Colin Campbell, the British Commander in [illegible] and then taken to Kanpur, thence sent to Allahabad Fort.

The British regarded the defence of the Residency as one of the most heroic exploits in their military annals.


LUCKNOW IN 1857...
ALSO SHOWING THE ROUTES TAKEN BY THE BRITISH GENERALS FOR THE RELIEF OF THE RESIDENCY...
SCALE OF MILES.
N
GOMATI RIVER.
FROM MUSABAGH
HUSSAINABAD
STONE BRIDGE
GREAT IMAMBARA.
MACHCHI BHAWAN
OUTRAM, MARCH 1858.
TO FYZABAD.
& CHINHAT.
IRON BRIDGE
BADSHAH BAGH.
RESIDENCY
LUCKNOW
CITY
SHAH NAJAF.
MOTI MAHAL
KHURSHID MANZIL
KAISER BAGH
BEGUM PALACE
BARRACKS OF 32ND REGT.
JAGRAULI
UJRAWAN.
OUTRAM, MAR. 1858
GOMATI RIVER.
CANAL.
CHAR BAGH BRIDGE.
GARHI KHURD
CHAR BAGH.
CANAL
DIL
BHAGARWA
JAMITA.
YELLOW HOUSE
SIR COLIN CAMPBELL, NOV 1857
SIR COLIN CAMPBELL, MARCH 1858
FROM KANPUR
OUTRAM & HAVELOCK, SEPT. 1857
ALAM BAGH
(PRESENT CANTONMENT.)
TO SULTANPUR



HAZRAT MAHAL PARK LUCKNOW

[illegible] memory of the [illegible] Queen of Awadh, the [illegible] Pradesh Government [illegible] Begum Hazrat Mahal [illegible] lawns [illegible] view of the [illegible] which flows by [illegible] portraits of the Nawabs of Awadh [illegible]

Sir Henry Lawrence in the address were but a distorted and exaggerated version of the truth.*

The news of the mutiny of Meerut reached Lucknow on May 14, and the next day came the news of the capture of Delhi. Sir Henry was now placed in supreme charge of Avadh with the control both of the army and the civil administration.

The regular uprising at Lucknow took place on May 30 at night at the Cantonment of Muriaon. Sir Henry Lawrence was having his dinner when at 9 o'clock he heard the news of the rising of the 71st Regiment. It had been previously settled among the sepoys that at 9 o'clock a detachment of this regiment would attack the bungalows of the English. A gun used to be fired at 9 o'clock every day to announce the time to soldiers and others. As soon as this gun was fired on that night the soldiers rose. The mess house of the 71st Regiment was set on fire and the Englishmen were fired at. The first victim among the English was Lt. Grant who in attempting to escape had hidden himself under a mattress. The sepoys came to know about it, dragged him out and killed him. Then came the turn of Lt. Hardinge who was guarding some streets with his cavalry. He received a sword cut. Brigadier Handscomb was also killed.

On the morning of May 31, Sir Henry Lawrence marched on the rebels with the English soldiers under him and a few sepoys who were still loyal. On the way, the 7th Cavalry Regiment, which was with him till then, also rose. He had no alternative but to leave them to join the rebels and returned to his place. Before sunset the 71st Infantry, the 48th Infantry and the 7th Cavalry Regiments together with irregular troops hoisted the flag of freedom. The English could do nothing although they had the whole of the 32nd Europeans stationed at Lucknow in addition to the artillery. The sepoys had, however, broken away without making a stand. Some of them were taken prisoner, tried by court-martial, and many were hanged. A portion of the rebels now marched off to Delhi. The loyal sepoys, whose number was about 1,200, remained on. They were eventually sent on leave, but 500 Indian soldiers threw their lot with the British to defend the Residency against their own country-men.

After the outbreak on May 30, there were some disturbances in the city, but the police were able to suppress them. Sir Henry Lawrence now transferred his headquarters from the Cantonment to the Residency in which European women and children had also been removed, some of them being accommodated in the Machchhi Bhawan. But the tides of the revolution had by now swept the surrounding districts and there were uprisings now almost in all the 12 districts in which Avadh was then divided, notably Sitapur, Faizabad, Bahraich and Gonda.

Sir Henry Lawrence began his preparations by fortifying the Residency and the Machchhi Bhawan. To these places English women and children were to be taken for safety. The Residency was then a sort of small fortified mohalla in itself occupying the highest point of an elevated plateau sloping down sharply towards the river Gomati. The Machchhi Bhawan was also a large fortified palace on a high elevation on the bank of the river. The magazine stores previously under the charge of the sepoys were removed to this building which was now guarded by European soldiers. Supplies of wheat and other provisions were also stored there as well as in the Residency. Sir Henry also arranged for the giving of military drill to, and the teaching of the use of the rifle by,

*Thus, the Muslim rulers patronised and encouraged non-Muslims who occupied high ranks in civil and military office, and in the court of Ranjit Singh the Fakir brothers occupied a position of trust and influence. Not so under the Company's Government.

certain officials and non-officials. The British also sent a mission to Nepal requesting for help from Rana Jung Bahadur, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal.

The sepoys on their part were equally active in organising themselves secretly. The first signs of open revolt came, however, from the villagers of Malihabad, about 14 miles from Lucknow, on May 27, when armed villagers watched the movement of British troops through that area. Captain Hutchinson, Military Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, reported about this event in these words : "Our march through Malihabad was watched by armed villagers, and this only 14 miles from Lucknow, where three months previously they dared not have lifted a finger and where the year before, in September, I had encamped in perfect security."*

By the middle of June, British authority had collapsed throughout the province of Avadh. But the city of Lucknow was still open and European fugitives from out-stations still found their way to this last refuge of the new regime.

D. THE SIEGE OF RESIDENCY.

The whole province of Avadh became independent about the 10th June. Sepoys and volunteers from different towns and districts marched towards Lucknow. At Lucknow Sir Henry Lawrence was still holding the city although the British had lost the whole province.

In the course of his preparations to meet the onslaught, Sir Henry Lawrence had, after the revolt of the sepoys on May 31, formed a regiment of Sikhs and another regiment of loyal Indians.

Both sides were ready for the conflict, but they postponed the struggle. Both of them awaited the result of the rising at Kanpur. Each party was basing its hopes regarding Lucknow on the result of the fighting at Kanpur. Sir Henry Lawrence had written to Lord Canning on June 23, expressing the hope that "if Kanpur stands, it is doubtful whether Lucknow will be besieged at all".

On June 28, came the news that not a single Englishman was left alive at Kanpur. Further, after General Wheeler's capitulation some of the nationalist forces of Kanpur marched to Lucknow. On June 28, they were at Nawabgunj, 20 miles from Lucknow. Sir Henry Lawrence at once withdrew his troops from the Cantonment to the Residency. In the meanwhile a collection of rebel troops who had marched from Faizabad, but had not yet entered Lucknow, marched up to Chinhat, a village about 8 miles to the east of the city, to attack the English. Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah of Faizabad was at their head.

On his part Sir Henry Lawrence was doing everything possible to save Lucknow. He had a feeling that unless the Kanpur defeat was counteracted, not only the Residency at Lucknow but even Fort William at Calcutta would not be safe.

Instead of waiting in the Residency, Sir Henry Lawrence went out with a force of 700 men to Chinhat with the idea of overpowering the mutineers there. The composition of his troops was some 400 Europeans of the 32nd Regiment, the rest being Sikhs and some local sepoys.

A fierce engagement was fought on June 30, in which the English were completely defeated. They retreated from the battle field with great loss. Of the 400 English soldiers nearly 150 were killed, in addition many Sikhs and Indian sepoys (fighting on

*Hutchinson : *Narrative of Events in Avadh*, pp. 55-56.

the British side) were also killed. On the field of battle the English left behind two guns and a howitzer. The line of the retreat "was marked by the bodies of the 32nd, their arms, their accoutrements ; men were falling untouched by ball ; the heat of a June sun was killing more than the enemy . . . . In one fatal day the 32nd have left 3 officers and 116 men to tell the tale of British heroism ; but alas ! also of British failure"—Rees, L. E. R., in the *Personal Narrative of the Siege of Lucknow* (London 1858), p. 90.

The nationalist forces were in hot pursuit until Sir Henry Lawrence, with the survivors, took shelter in the Residency. Thus ended the battle of Chinhat.

On their defeat at Chinhat, the British were entirely demoralized and there was widespread panic. In the Residency, there was utter confusion. Women and children were flying to the Resident's house from all the outposts, and everyone thought of his life only. But the nationalist troops failed to take advantage of this confusion. If they had followed the retreating enemy they might have got a foot-hold on the Residency itself. As things were, the British got a respite and made up for the defeat by strengthening the garrison.

The next day, July 1, the pursuing Indian army forced their way into the city of Lucknow. Both the Residency and the Machchhi Bhawan were invested by the sepoys. Sir Henry Lawrence thought that he could not defend both the Residency and the Machchhi Bhawan. He, therefore, vacated the latter in order to make the defence of the Residency more effective. The arsenal in the Machchhi Bhawan, containing a large quantity of ammunition, was accordingly blown up and all Englishmen were brought within the Residency, at the dead of night. There were enough stores, provisions, arms and ammunition in the Residency to stand a long siege. In it there were now about one thousand Englishmen and a considerable number of loyal Indian sepoys. Besides, numbers of personal servants of the officers were also there.

Sir Henry Lawrence made preparations for defending the Residency against the nationalist forces who were collecting outside. A regular siege of the Residency then began. The Residency was built by the Nawabs of Avadh for the accommodation of the British Resident at their court. It was completed in 1800 and was a very beautiful building set in extensive surroundings on a high mound facing the Gomati river.

Soon after laying siege to the Residency the Indian troops occupied the nearby houses and mosques from which they could send fire to the buildings within the Residency enclosure. In the process of investment, the besiegers exhibited great ingenuity and much perseverance and this was acknowledged in the official despatch prepared in due course by Brig. Inglis. Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah of Faizabad was the main source of inspiration to the revolutionaries and with him were Raja Gur Bux Singh of Ramnagar Dhameri and Raja Nawab Ali Khan of Mahmoodabad with their respective forces.

Besieged with the English in the Residency were Indians of high rank who had earlier been placed in detention by the Chief Commissioner as a precautionary measure. The elder brother of Wajid Ali Shah, Mustafa Ali Khan, was there—he had been excluded from succeeding to the kingdom by his father because of his weak-mindedness. Also with the besieged were Mirza Mohammad Humayun and Mirza Mohammad Shikoh, the princes of the Delhi Imperial Family, who were living at Lucknow in the court of Wajid Ali Shah. The British thought that the rebels might make political use of them and so they had been taken into custody. There was also the young Raja of Tulsipur, the owner of a large estate in the Terai, as also Nawab Rukn-ud-daullah, a son of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan, one of the former rulers of

Avadh. Mingled with these dignitaries were miscellaneous kinds of people, such as civil servants, merchants and professional men. There were then some Frenchmen, an Italian, a German, and so forth.

Sir Henry Lawrence was killed a few days after the commencement of the siege by a shell bursting in the room occupied by him. A day earlier, a shell had fallen on that apartment and Sir Henry had promised to his staff that he would shift to a safer place. Before that could be done, the fatal shell burst in the same room and mortally wounded the Chief Commissioner. In the darkness caused by the bursting of the shell, one of the staff asked the Chief Commissioner : "Sir Henry, are you hurt ?" After a short while a feeble voice was heard to say : "I am killed".

The surgeon soon came and on interrogation told the Chief Commissioner that he had only about 48 hours to live. Sir Henry then busied himself with making valuable suggestions about the defence and appointing Major Banks as his successor. Till the last moment, he retained consciousness and performed his duties in giving detailed instructions. And thus died a noble soul in the fullness of manhood and in trying "to do his duty".*

Before the news of the death of Sir Henry Lawrence reached England, he had been nominated to succeed provisionally to the Governor-Generalship in the event of the death of Lord Canning or his resignation, until such time as a successor arrived from England. This was abundant proof of the reputation he had won during his 34 years' service in India. Sir Henry was a man of devout religion ; and God-fearing. He had much influence over the Indian people because he made allowances for many of their prejudices and habits. Besides being generous and considerate he always showed appreciation of their many good qualities.

The besieged experienced great hardship during the siege. Women and children were accommodated in *tahkhanas*, as these places were the safest from shots and shells. The houses within the Residency compound were over-crowded and this made it impossible to segregate the patients when cholera and small-pox broke out. There were deaths everywhere and two incumbents of the office of Chief Commissioner were killed within three weeks, the first being Sir Henry Lawrence and the second his successor, Major Banks. The windows of the houses were barricaded with book-cases to protect the houses from musket-balls. Up to July 7, the deaths averaged about 15--20 daily and were mostly caused by rifle and musket-balls. Many persons were killed from the shots of one of the rebels who fired from a house almost without ever missing his aim.

When the ammunition of the nationalist army ran out, they fired with bullets made of wood, pieces of iron, copper coins and horns of bullocks. These missiles also found their marks.

The nerves of both men and women in the Residency entrenchment suffered severe strain. They began to think of extreme measures in case the nationalist forces forced their way into the fort. The women-folk began to think of destroying themselves in that event and some of the ladies kept prussic acid nearby to serve as an instant poison. Even the high-placed soldiers, such as Colonel Inglis, at one time talked of the blowing up of women at the last moment. But some of the ladies maintained their balance ; amongst them was one Mrs. Case who did not think it right to resort to wholesale destruction. She was prepared for death in whatever form it came from the

*"Here lies Henry Lawrence who tried to do his duty", are the words inscribed on his epitaph in the grounds of the Lucknow Residency.

enemy and to leave the rest in the hands of Him who knew what was best for them.

Martin Gubbins, the Financial Commissioner, who was amongst the besieged, has described how one day a military officer took him aside and told him that his (the military officer's) wife had desired that she should be killed by him if the besiegers forced their way into the Residency, and that he had agreed with her. The officer then went on to suggest that he was willing to do the same deed of despair in respect of Mrs. Gubbins, should Mr. Gubbins himself were to fall earlier. The officer then asked for a pledge from Mr. Gubbins that if he himself perished before destroying his wife, Mr. Gubbins should be ready to put a pistol-ball on the officer's widow. Mr. Gubbins, however, declined to give any such pledge saying that the necessity for it had not arisen, that there was, therefore, no need to provide for it, and that, in any case, he could not undertake to do such a deed.*

Now and then the besieged sent out small parties of daring men, both Europeans and Indians, to fight the nationalist forces. This served to keep up the morale of the defenders. In one of these sorties, the English were successful in raiding a house (near the Residency enclosure) from which a marksman had been inflicting death after death on the besieged. It is recorded that his every bullet found its mark and in admiration of his skill the besieged had nick-named him BOB THE NAILER. The raid was a surprise one, the inmates were taken unawares and Bob was killed at his post.

After the capture of Kanpur by General Havelock, the besieged began to entertain high hopes of relief coming from that direction. But it took long to come, and many became sullen in despair. Some became so hopeless of life that their existence became a burden to them ; they began to envy the lot of the dead when carried to their graves every evening. There were one or two cases of suicide too, a Lieutenant by name Graham being one of them.

The siege of the Residency lasted for 87 days. During this period the nationalist forces made four serious attempts to capture it by general assault, but none succeeded. They fought with daring, advancing towards the entrenchment regardless of the fire from the ramparts which literally mowed them down. The number of the besieging force was estimated at greatly varying figures. According to one estimate it was from twenty to forty thousand, according to another full one lakh. But in any case it is to be remembered that it consisted mostly of ill-armed, ill-disciplined and ill-trained contingents of peasants supplied by the taluqdars of Avadh. These were really of little military value against the trained Europeans who were well supplied with cannon, rifles and ammunition. The nationalist forces also carried out mining operations which caused great danger to the besieged, but the Residency could not be carried by mining alone.

E. BIRJIS QADAR PROCLAIMED KING, HAZRAT MAHAL REGENT

The nationalist army soon found that it was necessary to have a proper and dignified leader in whose name and under whose authority the war and the civil administration could be carried on. They began to search for a person in the royal household and approached several wives residing in Lucknow of Wajid Ali Shah to set up their son as king. On account of the fear of consequences none agreed save Begum

*Mutinies in Oudh by Martin Richard Gubbins, page 349.

Hazrat Mahal. Her son, Mirza Birjis Qadar, was thereupon proclaimed King of Avadh under the suzerainty of the Delhi Emperor to whom he was to pay tribute. As Birjis Qadar was a minor (11 years), Begum Hazrat Mahal was appointed Regent to carry on the affairs of the State in his name.

The task before Queen Hazrat Mahal was full of difficulties from the very beginning. In the first place, the other Begums as well as the members of the royal family did not like the installation of Birjis Qadar and the concentration of power in the hands of Hazrat Mahal. She had, therefore, to counteract the conspiratorial activities of these ladies and this required much tact and perseverance. As a shrewd lady she herself took up the work of supervising all civil as well as military matters and was thus able to ward off the consequences of palace intrigues. There was then the problem of maintaining law and order in the city, a problem which had become acute as a result of the sudden disappearance of British authority. In order to secure effective co-operation of all elements, the Queen constituted a Court of Administration which included Nawab Sharf-ud-daula who was appointed Naib, Mammu Khan (the ex-King's Prime Minister) as Dewan, Husain-ud-daula as a General and Raja Jai Lal Singh as Collector of the Army. Maharaja Bal Kishan, the Finance Minister of King Wajid Ali Shah, was offered Finance Ministership which he first declined, but was later persuaded to accept. The Court used to meet twice or thrice a week in the Tarwali Kothi which now houses the State Bank of India.

Later, proclamations were issued to all taluqdars and zamindars informing them that the ancestral kingdom of Avadh was now restored to the rightful owner of the realm and that a handful of foreigners who had remained would soon be exterminated. Arrangements were also made for enlisting troops for new regiments and commanding officers to them were appointed.

There were several British prisoners at Kaiser Bagh under the control of Queen Hazrat Mahal. The revolutionaries, fired with feelings of revenge, requested the Queen to hand over the captives to them. They took away the men-folk, but the noble Queen declined to make over any of the women and children. Even British historians have praised the Begum as the upholder of the dignity of womanhood.

The nationalist forces had several leaders, besides the members of the Council of Administration. Nana Saheb was there. So also were there Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah of Faizabad and Babu Kunwar Singh. General Bakht Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the nationalist forces at Delhi, who had come to Lucknow after extricating his forces from that city on its re-capture by the British, was also there. Prince Feroz Shah too was in the city. The supreme and co-ordinating authority was, however, exercised by Queen Hazrat Mahal as the Regent to young Birjis Qadar who had been selected as Nawab on July 7 and who was crowned as "Wali" on August 6, 1858.

Certain incidents connected with the revolt prove that the Queen had the qualities of a military leader on the one hand and of a statesman on the other. In order to make the city of Lucknow safe from the advancing forces of the British from Kanpur, she lost no time in making a grant of Rs.5,00,000 for a protecting wall being built around the city. Later, she made endeavours to win over Rana Jang Bahadur of Nepal to her side by promising him Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Arrah, Chhapra and Varanasi. The British on their part had tried to win over Nepal by the promise of Gorakhpur and a part of Avadh. Though eventually the Rana sided with the British, the fact remains that Begum Hazrat Mahal had played, unsuccessfully though, a diplomatic trump card in the affair.

F. THE RE-CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW.

After the Indian rule of some three months the British were able to re-capture Lucknow in April, 1858, by forces under the command of Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, aided by Maharaja Jung Bahadur, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. The Nepal Darbar owed a grudge to Avadh because Nawab Ghaziuddin Haider had rendered financial help to the Company during the difficult days of the Nepal War and for which the British Government had raised his status to that of a king and had made some territorial concessions in his favour.

The importance of re-occupying Lucknow as soon as possible had been emphasized by the Governor-General in a letter to the Commander-in-Chief, written in January, 1858, which ran : "Every eye in India is upon Oudh, as it was upon Delhi. Oudh is not only the rallying place of the sepoys,—the place to which they all look, and by the doings in which their own hopes and prospects rise or fall,—but it represents a dynasty : there is a King of Oudh seeking his own. Oudh and our dealings with it have been in every native's mind for the last two years. The attention of all native chiefs is drawn to see whether or not we can retain hold of what we have taken".

Before the arrival of Sir Colin, Generals Outram and Havelock and Neill had come from Kanpur to the aid of Lucknow, but were unsuccessful in ousting the nationalist troops. These Commanders accompanied by 3,000 troops had set forth from Kanpur on September 19 and, arriving on the outskirts of Lucknow, found the nationalist forces within and round about Alambagh. A fierce battle was fought on the 23rd in which the English were able to capture this important post which they made their base of operations. Subsequent battles took place on the following days and in one of them General Neill was killed. But though the British were able to secure some parts of the city, the Residency and Alambagh remained separated from each other. Thus, the British found themselves besieged at both the places without any effective means of inter-communication.

Sir James Outram now (September 26) assumed supreme command of the military and also took over the office of Chief Commissioner. He held on during October and November in the midst of severe attacks from the nationalist forces until Sir Colin Campbell came to his succour. On November 16, the Commander-in-Chief met with stiff resistance of 3,000 brave sepoys armed with muskets who defended the enclosure at Sikander Bagh till the last hero fell. The Commander-in-Chief was struck by the valour of these men and, like a true soldier, gave credit to his enemy by recording : "There never was a bolder feat of arms".

Over two thousand of the nationalist troops were killed in almost hand-to-hand fight in defence of Sikander Bagh ; their bodies were found strewn about in the building and the central court. Not a soul had escaped to tell the tale and the silence round about was agonising. Forbes-Mitchell has recorded the case of two officers of the nationalist force who met a brave death inside a dark room while defending their flag.

After occupying Sikander Bagh, the British advanced towards the Shah Najaf* where too

*Shah Najaf, also called Najaf Ashraf, is an imitation of the mausoleum (of the same name near Karbala in Arabia) of Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. It was built by King Ghazi-ud-din Haider for the internment of his remains, and on his death in 1827 he was buried there. His Queen Mubarak Mahal also was buried in it. The tombs are in solid silver and gold. The building stands on the bank of the Gomati, and the inside is profusely decorated with chandeliers and floral designs. During the Moharram and on the death anniversary of the Queen Mubarak Mahal the premises are tastefully illuminated.

the nationalist forces had now collected, and a heavy cannonade was maintained against it for three hours. The place was subsequently stormed and captured and thus on November 17, Campbell and his forces were able to establish communication with the Residency which lay beyond.

It was not, however, before several days' fighting that Sir Colin could liberate the Residency and carry the besieged women and children to Kanpur. The nationalist troops in and around Lucknow numbered some fifty thousand, and with the small force at his command Sir Colin could not expect to hold Lucknow. It was for this reason that he evacuated the Residency (November 22, mid-night) and arranged to carry the women and children and the wounded to Kanpur. The evacuees were taken *via* Dilkusha and Sikander Bagh to Alambagh and thence to Kanpur. They were accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief himself who had to leave for Kanpur to save it from the threatened attack by Tatya Tope at the head of the Gwalior Contingent.

Lucknow was now left in charge of General Outram with some 3,000 to 4,000 troops at the Alambagh base. Here he was attacked by the nationalist troops several times, but continued to hold on, on the strength of superior military tactics and resources in arms and ammunition. Begum Hazrat Mahal, seated on an elephant, also took part in one of the attacks, but the British could not be dislodged.

In the meanwhile the Commander-in-Chief had defeated Tatya Tope at Kanpur and was now free to put all his forces against Lucknow. He arrived again on March 2, with a large army. There was stubborn resistance and the city was resolutely defended for a week. On March 9, the British were able to launch a general attack and in a few days Outram captured Hazrat-gunj, Kaiser Bagh* and Musa Bagh.†

The nationalist forces fought a series of desperate battles with admirable courage as is borne out by the fact that, in the Begum Kothi, 860 of them were found dead in the central court alone when the building was stormed. Begum Hazrat Mahal herself maintained her courage and bearing in the midst of successive reverses, and moved amongst the troops during battle unmindful of her personal safety. At Musa Bagh, a place of retreat of the nationalist forces, they held on for some days against the British onslaught, as a result of the inspiration provided personally by the Begum.

Queen Hazrat Mahal was living in the palaces of Kaiser Bagh with the young King. On several occasions she was threatened with capture by the British, but she resolutely remained in the palace lest her flight might cause demoralisation in the nationalist forces.

However, near about the middle of November, the British onslaught on Kaiser Bagh was imminent and it was then, on the advice of her Ministers, that along with King Birjis Qadar and the ladies of the household, she vacated the palace and took up residence, one after the other, at various private houses in the city.

It is recorded that the British sent several messages to the Queen to return to Kaiser Bagh promising to her many inducements, including even the return of the kingdom to King Wajid Ali Shah, if only the Queen could end the war. But the Queen and her

*The Kaiser Bagh palaces, built by King Wajid Ali Shah, were completed in 1850. They consisted of large and artistic yellow buildings enclosing all the four sides of an extensive quadrangle. In the centre of the quadrangle stood (and still stands) a magnificent *baradari*.

†Musa Bagh was laid out by Nawab Asaf-ud-daula in the north-west of Lucknow on the Kakori Road. It was a favourite country residence of the Nawabs. It was here that on May 7, 1857, the 7th Avadh Irregular Regiment refused to use the greased cartridges, and many of the men paid with their lives. Here also was fought the last battle of Lucknow on March 19, 1858.

advisers considered the offers as merely deceptive and impossible of fulfilment.

Amongst the notable Europeans killed in Lucknow were Sir Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner and the supreme army commander for Avadh; General Havelock,* General Neill. Also killed was Major Hudson who had become notorious on account of his having murdered the three princes of the Imperial Family after the fall of Delhi. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, himself narrowly escaped death by suffering a mere wound. In the rank and file of the British, casualties were heavy.

On the side of the nationalist forces various computations have been made. According to one calculation the number who laid down their lives was 75,000, including those who were summarily hanged before the siege began, and the innumerable civilians who were killed in cold blood after the re-capture of the city. It is said that the massacre of the population was on a scale unheard of; every house in which the conquerors entered was turned into a slaughter house of men, women and children.

On the fall of Lucknow the city people, aware of the fate of Delhi, started running away with their womenfolk carrying infants in their arms. When they reached one of the bridges over the Gomati the British turned the guns on them killing and drowning thousands of innocent people. Those who had not joined the train of refugees and had shut themselves in their houses did not meet with a better fate. They were mercilessly bayoneted in their rooms. Hundreds of girls committed suicide by jumping into wells to save their honour.

Forbes-Mitchell records that many of the men had to be dislodged from closed rooms by throwing in bags of gun-powder with slow matches fixed to them. When these exploded they set fire to the clothing, cotton-padded quilts and furniture in the rooms. Consequently in the inner apartments of the palaces there were hundreds of dead bodies half-burnt; many wounded were burnt alive with the dead, and the stench from such rooms was horrible.†

On the re-taking of Lucknow, the Governor-General issued a general order which was published in the Supplement to the North-Western Provinces Gazette, dated April 13, 1858. With this order were also published the despatches of the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Colin Campbell, containing an account of the re-capture of Lucknow. The Governor-General profusely admired and congratulated the Commander-in-Chief on the capture of "the strong city of the rebels". Other officers who assisted him were also thanked.

During the last days of the operations, Maharaja Jang Bahadur, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, was associated with the army under Sir Colin Campbell's command. The Governor-General expressed his thanks "for the hearty co-operation which the Commander-in-Chief received from His Highness Maharaja Jang Bahadur and for the gallant bearing of His Highness' troops". The order concluded with these words: "To the officers and men of every service, soldiers, seamen and marines composing the forces by which Lucknow was taken, the Governor-General desires to express his admiration of their conduct and to tender to each individual the thanks of the Government of India. His Lordship will take the earliest opportunity of bringing under the favourable notice of Her Majesty's Government and of the Hon'ble the Court of Directors the services rendered by the Force.

*He was not killed in battle, but died of dysentery at Alambagh where he was buried.

†*Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, page 229.

In testimony of these services, the Governor-General is pleased to direct that every officer and soldier, European and Native, and the officers and men of the Navy who took part in the capture of Lucknow, shall receive a donation of six months' *batta*".

The Governor-General also issued a proclamation (which has come to be known as 'Lord Canning's Proclamation') in which the people of Avadh were told that their capital was now at the mercy of the British Government against which they had ranged themselves. They were also told that those who had been steadfast in their allegiance to the British would immediately be rewarded. It was proclaimed also that with the exception of loyal taluqdars, the proprietary rights in the soil of the province stood confiscated, to be disposed of by the British Government in a befitting manner. It concluded : "To those taluqdars, chiefs and land-owners, with their followers, who shall make immediate submission to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders, the Right Honourable the Governor-General promises that their life and honour shall be safe, provided that their hands are not stained with English blood, murderously shed. But as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the condition in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves upon the justice and mercy of the British Government."

This proclamation had, however, little effect upon the taluqdars who did not choose to submit on its terms. The threatened confiscation of their lands meant the breath of their life, because to lose their lands was to live without honour. They were left with little faith in British justice and lesser in British mercy. So, contrary to the expectations of Lord Canning, hostilities at once broke out afresh over a much wider area than before. The British had no doubt gained possession of Lucknow, but outside, things were in a turmoil.

After the fall of Lucknow, the Queen retired with a large following across the river Ghagra and posted herself in the fort of Baundi in the Bahraich district. She fortified the stronghold with heavy guns and troops made up of 1,500 cavalry and 500 mutineer sepoys with a train of najeebs and followers. The taluqdars of Avadh voluntarily brought the revenue payable by them. Many of them tendered gifts of their valuables and money to the Queen.

The Queen though vanquished at Lucknow was successful in stirring the rest of Avadh. There were a series of sporadic risings in different parts of the province and the English had to face the toughest encounters in the whole history of the rebellion. The taluqdars and zamindars, who rode with their irregular levies, were greatly attached to the Queen and her cause. The Begum never thought of surrender for a moment. After the issue of the proclamation of Queen Victoria, the Begum published a counter proclamation under the seal of King Birjis Qadar warning the people of Avadh not to be misled by false promises. They were urged not to place their faith in the offer of pardon. Portions of the proclamation read thus : "At this time certain weak-minded, foolish people have spread a report that the English have forgiven the faults and crimes of the people of Hindostan ; this appears very astonishing, for it is the unvarying custom of the English never to forgive a fault, be it great or small ; so much so that if a small offence be committed through ignorance or negligence they never forgive it. . . . Therefore, we, the ever-abiding Government, parents of the people of Avadh, with great consideration, put forth the present Proclamation, in order that the real object of the chief points may be exposed, and our subjects be placed on their guard."

The British star was, however, on the ascent and the Begum's efforts for further struggle bore no fruit. Yet having once taken up

arms, she would not think of laying them down. She could no longer hold on to Baundi against the attack of the Commander-in-Chief and in December, 1858, left the fort and wandered about in the Nepal Terai with a small number of faithful soldiers, half-armed, half-fed and without artillery. It was some time in the last quarter of 1859 that she ultimately crossed over to Nepal where, after much difficulty, she found refuge. Amongst her faithful followers in Nepal were Rana Beni Madho Singh and Miftah-ud-daula. She spent the rest of her days at Kathmandu with her son Birjis Qadar. She died in 1874.

G. THE VALOUR OF INDIAN WOMEN

A feature of national pride in the battles of Lucknow was the prominent part which the women-folk took, not only in the subsidiary actions of the struggle, but in actual fighting. In one of the six attacks on Alambagh the Queen herself had appeared on the battle-field to encourage her troops. On February 25, 1858, accompanied with her officers, she went on an elephant to supervise the defence arrangements and fighting operations. So, though Lucknow was lost, the valour of Indian womanhood was left to fill some proud pages of Indian history.

In the battle of Sikander Bagh one of the ladies fought with great gallantry, and eventually braved death with extraordinary courage after having killed many a European soldier. Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell was an eye-witness to her last moments and the case is best described in his own graphic words : "In the centre of the inner court of Secunder Bagh there was a large *peepul* tree with a very bushy top, round the foot of which were set a number of jars full of cool water. When the slaughter was almost over, many of our men went under the tree for the sake of its shade, and to quench their burning thirst with a draught of the cool water from the jars. A number, however, lay dead under this tree, both of the Fifty-third and Ninety-third, and the many bodies lying in that particular spot attracted the notice of Captain Dawson. After having carefully examined the wounds, he noticed that in every case the men had evidently been shot from above. He thereupon stepped out from beneath the tree and called to Quaker Wallace to look up if he could see any one in the top of the tree, because all the dead under it had apparently been shot from above. Wallace had his rifle loaded, and stepping back he carefully scanned the top of the tree. He almost immediately called out, "I see him, sir !" and cocking his rifle he repeated aloud, 'I'll pay my vows now to the Lord, before His people all'. He fired, and down fell a body dressed in a tight-fitting red jacket and tight-fitting rose-coloured silk trousers ; and the breast of the jacket bursting open with the fall, showed that the wearer was a woman. She was armed with a pair of heavy old-pattern cavalry pistols, one of which was in her belt still loaded, and her pouch was still about half full of ammunition, while from her perch in the tree, which had been carefully prepared before the attack, she had killed more than half-a-dozen men. When Wallace saw that the person whom he shot was a woman, he burst into tears exclaiming : 'If I had known it was a woman, I would rather have died a thousand deaths than have harmed her'."*

Another case is recorded of an elderly woman who, a few days after the fall of Lucknow, was noticed lurking near the Iron Bridge and collecting small pieces of rags. Later, she was found dead, but "close to her hand lay a piece of cotton, like a candle wick, and

Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny, pp. 57-58.

partially burnt, while nearby, hidden by the rubbish, appeared through the floor, close to where the dead woman's hand rested, a bamboo containing a slow match". The bamboo led to an enormous mine (Major Majendie in *Up among the Pandies or A Year's Service in India*, 1859, pages 236—38). Dr. Sen poignantly observes about this old lady : "What wrongs her feeble hands strove to avenge will never be known. What tragedy embittered her flickering life, history will never discover".*

That there were other instances of women fighting for the defence of the city is borne out by Gordon Alexander who has recorded that amongst the slain at Sikander Bagh there were a few amazon negresses and that "they fought like wild cats, and it was not till after they were killed that their sex was even suspected".†

H. THE PLUNDER AND DESTRUCTION

On its fall, the city of Lucknow was the victim of severe plunder at the hands of British soldiers. In this respect this unfortunate city fared no better than Delhi, Jhansi, Bithoor and other captured towns. The war correspondent of the *London Times*, Sir W.H.Russell, described Lucknow as he saw it on March 11, 1858, in these words : "Not Rome, not Athens, not Constantinople, not any city I have ever seen, appears to me so striking and beautiful as this, and the more I gaze the more its beauties grow upon me." He was looking at the city from the minaret of the Dilkusha Palace. A week later, when Lucknow was completely recaptured by the British, it was a dead city in the literal sense of that expression. The once gorgeous rooms of its palaces were strewn with shattered mirrors, broken furniture, battered statues and putrid corpses. The river Gomati was full of swollen bodies and birds of prey filled the sky. Beautiful buildings of the city presented a miserable appearance with walls and gilded domes riddled with bullets and cannon shots.

The sack of the city began from the first day the British launched their attack. The principal places attacked were the royal palaces spreading from Hazratganj to the Residency. The buildings were first damaged by bombardment and later stormed by the infantry. Then followed plunder and murder. The Begum Kothi in Hazratganj, the Maqbara of King Amjad Ali Shah, the Noor Baksh palace, the Zahur Baksh palace and the Kaiserbagh palaces came in for plunder in turn. The Kaiserbagh palaces were more of a fairy land than a part of the earth. They were built in exquisite style and luxuriously furnished. They contained a large collection of pieces of precious art and treasures which were accumulated from the time of the first Nawab Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan. The gardens in the extensive yard were maintained in great beauty, with fountains, orange groves, aqueducts and moulded lamp-posts.

Maddened by thirst for blood and greed of gold, the conquerors ran from room to room collecting things of value which they could carry and destroying the rest, such as mirrors, pictures and vases. They took out precious stones from the hilts of swords, butts of pistols and other firearms and also from costly dresses.

The royal library in Kaiserbagh consisting of about 40,000 books and manuscripts of great value was completely destroyed in the fighting in Kaiserbagh.

Sir William Russell thus writes about the happenings following the storming of the

Eighteen Fifty-seven, p. 249.

†P. 104 of Lt-Col. Gordon Alexander's *Recollections of a Highland Subaltern during the campaigns of the 93rd Highlanders in India under Sir Colin Campbell* (London, 1898).

Begam Kothi : "The scene of plunder was indescribable. The soldiers had broken up several of the store-rooms and pitched the contents into the court which was lumbered with cases, with embroidered clothes, gold and silver brocade, silver vessels, arms, banners, drums, shawls, scarfs, musical instruments, mirrors, pictures, books, accounts, medicine bottles, gorgeous standards, shields, spears, and a heap of things, the enumeration of which would make this sheet of paper like a catalogue of a broker's sale. Through these moved the men, wild with excitement, 'drunk with plunder'. I had often heard the phrase, but never saw the thing itself before. They smashed to pieces the fowling pieces and pistols to get at the gold mountings and the stones set in the stocks. They burnt in the fire, which they made in the centre of the court, brocades and embroidered shawls for the sake of gold and silver. China, glass and jade they dashed to pieces in pure wantonness ; pictures they ripped up, or tossed on the flames ; furniture shared the same fate."*

According to Forrest the Kaiserbagh palaces became a ruined charnel-house by nightfall when, on account of the darkness, the plunder had to be compulsorily suspended.

Amongst the plundered things was the golden *tazia* which had been made at a cost of several lakhs for the young King Birjis Qadar, for the Moharrum of August 1857. The original *tazia* belonging to the Royal Family had been taken with him to Calcutta by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, and this new one was made for Birjis Qadar out of the subscription of several lakhs which the people of Lucknow had raised. It was found in a dargah by British soldiers who, not knowing whether the diamonds in the crescent and the star on the dome of it were real or imitation, cut off the whole dome and presented it to their Lieutenant. It eventually found its way to London where it was sold for £80,000.†

A hundred books have given an account of the plunder of Lucknow, but by far the most vivid and authentic is to be found in the book of Major Forbes-Mitchell. He was an eye-witness to the happenings, was distressed by the black deeds of his colleagues and has, without fear, recorded them faithfully. "The sights that then met our eyes in the streets of Lucknow", writes the Major, "defy description. The city was in the hands of plunderers ; Europeans and Sikhs, Goorkhas, and camp-followers of every class, aided by the scum of the native population. Every man was in fact doing what was right in his own eyes and 'hell broke loose' is the only phrase in the English language that can give one, who has never seen such a sight, any idea of the scenes in and around the Imambara, the Kaiserbagh, and adjacent streets. The Sikhs and the Goorkhas were by far the most proficient plunderers, because they instinctively knew where to look for the most valuable loot. The European soldiers did not understand the business, and articles that might have proved a fortune to many were readily parted with for a few rupees in cash and a bottle of grog. But the gratuitous destruction of valuable property that could not be carried off was appalling. Colour-Sergeant Graham, of Captain Burroughs' company, rescued from the fire a bundle of Government of India promissory notes of the value of over a lakh of rupees, and Mr. Kavanagh, afterwards discovering the rightful owner, secured for Sergeant Graham a reward of five per cent. on the amount."‡

Forbes-Mitchell goes on to add that it is impossible to find words to depict the scenes which met one's eyes at every turn in the

*Sir W. H. Russell, *My Diary in India*, 1858-59, Vol. I, p. 333.

†Forbes-Mitchell, pp. 226-27.

‡*Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, pp. 220-221.

streets of Lucknow. Mad riot and chaos reigned—sights fit only for the Inferno. He had previously only heard the phrase "drunk with plunder", but he saw it now in right earnest. Soldiers went mad with pillage and wild with excitement ; they were followed by crowds of camp-followers too cowardly to go to the front, but as ravenous as the vultures which followed the army and preyed on the carcases of the slain.

Later, prize-agents were appointed and guards placed at the different thoroughfares to intercept camp-followers and other plunderers, on their way back to camp, who were thus made to disgorge their plunder, nominally for the public good or the benefit of the army. "But it was shrewdly suspected by the troops that certain small caskets in battered cases, which contained the redemption of mortgaged estates in Scotland, England and Ireland, and snug fishing and shooting boxes in every game-haunted and salmon-frequented angle of the world, found their way inside the uniform-cases of even the prize-agents. I could myself name one deeply-encumbered estate which was cleared of mortgage to the tune of £1,80,000 within two years of the plunder of Lucknow . . . . Before we left Lucknow the plunder accumulated by the prize-agents was estimated at over £6,00,000 (according to *The Times* of 31st of May, 1858), and within a week it reached a million and a quarter sterling. What became of it all ?"*

In a single store-room, which had but a modest appearance, enormous wealth was found. There were big boxes containing the finest Kashmir shawls, silver-mounted and jewelled swords, a solid gold casket, divided into compartments, each compartment full of gems, such as diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds. There were also numerous tiaras studded with precious stones, including diamonds.†

After its capture, the city was handed over to the civil authorities. A proclamation was issued announcing that persons absent from their houses would be treated as rebels and all their property would be confiscated unless they presented themselves within a fortnight. There was hardly a family from which at least one member was not missing. Consequently, thousands of houses were confiscated and hundreds of thousands of men were rendered homeless. Large tracts of land were declared 'nazool'. The movable property in these houses was put in charge of prize-agents who acted no better than greedy bandits. They practised diabolical torture to make the people reveal their hidden wealth.

As a result mohallas after mohallas were deserted. The nobles were now reduced to paupers.

Buildings were also not left alone. The houses of the rebel leaders and many members of the Royal Family were razed to the ground. The Farhat Baksh Palace, to the west of Chhatar Manzil, and the Kaiserbagh palaces, to the east of the great quadrangle, were amongst those which were razed to the ground. The other buildings and residences situated in the area now occupied by the Victoria Park and the open ground near it met the same fate.

The Daulat Khana was a palace built by Nawab Asaf-ud-daula on the bank of the Gomati to the east of the Roomi Darwaza. Nana Saheb had stayed in it as a guest of Queen Hazrat Mahal during his sojourn in Lucknow. In their wrath against Nana Saheb, the British pulled down this palace too.

*Forbes-Mitchell, p. 228.

†Gordon Alexander, p. 283.

Numerous other buildings were levelled to the ground in order to facilitate the occupation of the city and to provide better defence in the event of future attacks from outside or uprising within. The Machchhi Bhawan Palace, was selected as the key position of the defence plan and the mass of houses round about it were brought down. Similarly, the habitations about Badshah Bagh were entirely swept away in order to make the place safe as an outpost.

Such was the fate of a great city, the centre of learning, culture and theology in North India. For two centuries Lucknow had been renowned throughout the countries of the eastern hemisphere as the seat of literary men, poets and craftsmen, making a notable contribution to the composite culture of India. In the field of fine arts it had few rivals, while the courtesy and etiquette of its people is still cherished by all lovers of good manners and chaste living. And our grief becomes the greater when we remember that though the valiant people of Avadh in the course of ten days obliterated the English administration from their land, there was, on their part, no cruelty, no vengeance. "The brave and turbulent population, with a few exceptions, treated fugitives of the ruling race with marked kindness and the high courtesy and chivalry of the people of Oudh was conspicuous in their dealings with their fallen masters."*

I. THE MEMORIAL

On the occasion of the centenary celebrations of 1857, the Uttar Pradesh Government erected at Lucknow a Martyrs' Memorial Tower in memory of the fighters for Indian independence. It is sited between the Chhatar Manzil (which now houses the Central Drug Research Institute) and the Iron Bridge, adjoining the river-bank road and facing the ruins of the Residency.

The tower is 68 feet high with a basement of eight feet square which gradually diminishes to six feet square at the top. The tower is made of pure marble with an ornamental capital at the top. The platform on which the tower stands has also a three-inch marble facing, and at its four corners are four small elephant-shaped fountains.

The Memorial is abundantly illuminated at night and presents an appearance of charm and dignity.

*Forrest's *State Papers*, Volume II, page 37.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

THE NAWABS OF BANDA AND FARRUKHABAD.

A. THE NAWAB OF BANDA.

- THE NAWAB'S DESCENT FROM THE PESHWA.
- THE OUT-BREAK.
- THE NAWAB PROCLAIMED RULER OF BANDA.
- BRITISH RE-OCCUPATION AND ATROCITIES ; THE END OF THE NAWAB.
- THE RAOS OF KARVI.

B. THE NAWAB OF FARRUKHABAD.

- EARLY HISTORY.
- THE UP-RISING AT FATEHGARH.
- THE NAWAB'S RULE.
- RESTORATION OF BRITISH AUTHORITY AND REPRISALS.
- REWARD ANNOUNCED FOR NAWAB'S CAPTURE.
- THE STRANGE CASE OF NIYAZ MOHAMMAD.

ANNEXURE **: LETTER OF NAWAB OF BANDA TO RAO SAHEB.**

A. THE NAWAB OF BANDA.

THE NAWAB'S DESCENT FROM THE PESHWA

At the time of the rebellion Nawab Ali Bahadur II was the titular Nawab of Banda. He derived his parentage from Peshwa Baji Rao I, being his great grandson, through Mastani* the Peshwa's favourite concubine. Here is his geneology :

Geneology

PESHWA BAJI RAO I —— MASTANI (Concubine)
(It is said that Baji Rao had carried her off from the siege of Jaitpur.†)

- NAWAB ALI BAHADUR I *1st Nawab* (Died 1802)
  (Ali Bahadur and his cousin, Ghani Bahadur, had served the Maratha army to the north of Delhi. Ali Bahadur commanded a division, and Ghani Bahadur became the first Maratha Governor of Saharanpur after its capture in 1789.)
  - SHAMSHER BAHADUR *2nd Nawab*
    (Had been granted *Jagir* and privileges by British Government). (Died 1823)
  - ZULFIQAR ALI BAHADUR *3rd Nawab* (Died 1849)
    - ALI BAHADUR II *4th Nawab*
      (Succeeded as Nawab in 1849. Took prominent part in the rebellion. Surrendered on the Queen's proclamation and was granted a pension of Rs. 4,800 p.a.).

*An account of this lady appears in Chapter 5, Section D (Peshwa Baji Rao I).

†Jaitpur Raj included the fort of Bhuragarh opposite the town of Banda and on the other side of the Ken river. It was constructed in 1746.

The great Bundela King, Chhatrasal, had bequeathed one-third of his territories to Peshwa Baji Rao I, as a mark of his gratitude for the Peshwa's timely aid against the Bangesh Nawab who had attacked him. The Peshwa in his turn later divided this Bundelkhand territory into three parts—one part going to the family of the founders of the Jhansi Raj, the other to one Govindpant Kher with headquarters at Sagar and the third consisting of Banda and Kalpi, to his illegitimate son, Ali Bahadur I, who became the first Nawab of Banda.

Soon after 1800, Ali Bahadur I attacked and took Ajaigarh and re-occupied Jaitpur. He then laid siege to Kalinjar, but died in 1802, before the great fortress could be captured. Earlier, he had concluded an arrangement with the Court of Poona by which the sovereign and paramount right of the Peshwa over all the conquests of Ali Bahadur was declared and acknowledged. His eldest son, Shamsher Bahadur, was absent at Poona at the time. His cousin, Ghani Bahadur, put Ali Bahadur's younger son, Zulfiqar Ali, on the masnad, assumed command of the troops and continued the siege. Shamsher Bahadur, on hearing of his father's death, hurried to the camp at Kalinjar, seized Ghani Bahadur and confined him in the fort of Ajaigarh (where he was afterwards poisoned) and himself took his father's place.

Meanwhile, by an agreement of 1803 with the British Government, the Peshwa had undertaken to cede in perpetuity to the East India Company from the province of Bundelkhand, conquered for the Poona State by Ali Bahadur, territory yielding a revenue of Rs.36,16,000. Though Bundelkhand had belonged to the Peshwa, he was induced to part with it in lieu of certain territories in the southern Maratha country, which were included in the cessions made by the Treaty of Bassein. From its situation in the neighbourhood of their position on the Yamuna, Bundelkhand was very important to the British. But the province could not be obtained without expelling certain chieftains who, though tributary to the Peshwa, were averse to place themselves under the yoke of the British. Hence for the acquisition of the province, an expedition was necessary. So from Allahabad, a detachment of British troops crossed the Yamuna and entered Bundelkhand in September, 1803. This force could not have so easily accomplished the occupation of Bundelkhand had not a soldier of fortune, named Gosain Himmat Bahadur, offered his services to the British and shown the way in which they could easily acquire the province. The offer of Himmat Bahadur was accepted and he joined the British with a large body of troops. There was no difficulty in reducing the petty chieftains and their forts. But the nominal ruler of the province, Shamsher Bahadur, still held out and so the united forces of the British and Himmat Bahadur crossed the river Ken on the outskirts of Banda in October and found the army of Shamsher Bahadur drawn up to oppose them. There was a battle fought at a place nine miles from Banda, but Shamsher Bahadur was easily defeated. He eventually surrendered early in 1804, on the assurance of an annual allowance of Rs.4 lakhs in perpetuity for himself and his family. Afterwards a large area near Banda was granted to him for himself and his troops and he was allowed to maintain a bodyguard "armed and dressed like the Company's troops".

On his death in 1823, Shamsher Bahadur was succeeded by his younger brother, Zulfiqar Ali. The latter died in 1849, whereupon the Nawabship passed to his son, Ali Bahadur II, who, at the time of the rebellion, was in the enjoyment of the full pension of Rs.4 lakhs which had originally been granted to his uncle.

Nawab Ali Bahadur II has been described by Sherer (who was at Banda at the time of the uprising) as "a youngish man, small and

slight, but very active in frame, and with a lively kind of fatuous manner about him . . . his natural disposition was easy and good-natured and he seemed free from resentment".*

THE OUT-BREAK

At the time of the rebellion there were in the Cantonment of Banda three companies of the 1*st* Native Infantry the headquarters of which were at Kanpur. Lieutenant Bennett was commanding these companies. Besides, there was a partially disciplined body of 125 troops in the service of the Nawab. The Collector of the district was Mr. F. O. Mayne. At Karvi, a sub-divisional headquarter, there was stationed Mr. Cockerell, the joint magistrate.

In the beginning of June, 1857, rumours were current in Banda that the mutineers from Kanpur were marching to assist their brethren at Banda. As a measure of precaution Mr. Mayne, at the invitation of the Nawab, sent the European ladies to the Nawab's palace for protection. With them was also sent half the party of European males to look after the ladies. On June 12. two bungalows were set on fire by bad characters. Mr. Mayne then thought it prudent to abandon his house and move to the palace whither the Nawab was anxious he should come at once. Things went on well for two or three days. The Nawab was very civil to the Europeans who were well provided for by him. Once or twice he went to them in the evening to enquire about their comforts.

On June 14, the three companies of the 1st Native Infantry, having received news of the mutiny of the rest of the battalion at Kanpur, refused to give up the treasure under their guard and also sent advice to the jail darogha not to allow the stores and the two cannon mounted there to be removed by the Collector. Mr. Mayne thereupon decided to take forceful possession of the cannon and to overawe the mutinous sepoys, with the aid of the Nawab's men and some troops of Ajaigarh. The troops were drawn up in the court-yard of the palace with the Nawab himself on horse-back to assist the Collector. The Nawab's commander was for some reason unable to take the command of the Nawab's troops ; so with the Nawab's consent, Lieutenant Bennett was placed in charge. The Nawab's troops resented this, broke out into open mutiny and attacked the Lieutenant with bayonets.

Great confusion now prevailed and a large disorderly mob collected there. It was with difficulty that the people could be restrained by the personal interposition of the Nawab. His troops then marched off to the Cantonment of the Native Infantry, singing a jehad, and the sepoys rose and armed themselves, sounding the alarm. The only hope of safety for the English women and men lay in flight. The Nawab himself was perplexed ; he dismounted and came to Mayne to tell him : "This is no place for you any longer. When my own servants disobey me, I am powerless. I recommend you to go to Nagode. Stay here, if you like, to-night ; the palace is at your disposal, but I say again, I cannot trust my people any longer". Sherer records that Mayne had then told the Nawab : "If I do go, I delegate my authority to you, and you must hold Banda for the British Government".

Meanwhile, his attendants and influential people of the town took the Nawab to his private apartments. Other well-meaning citizens came up and strongly urged Mr. Mayne to fly before the Nawab's guards returned. The decision was then taken and in hurry and scuffle the whole party left the Nawab's palace at 8 p.m. on June 14, escaping by a few hours the attack by a detachment of sepoys sent down to intercept them. They marched 36 miles to Kalinjar

***Havelock's March on Cawnpore.*

during the night, the ladies travelling in phaetons. Finding the people hostile there, the party went on to Nagode where they arrived in safety on the morning of June 16. From there they were conveyed to various places of safety.

THE NAWAB PROCLAIMED RULER OF BANDA

After the party had left Banda, the Nawab immediately proclaimed his own rule and made arrangements through the Government police for preventing the town from being plundered. The mutineers, that is to say those who had mutinied against the Nawab himself, marched to the jail, released the prisoners and took possession of stores and cannon. They then proclaimed their own rule in opposition to that of the Nawab. However, the Nawab's claim to rule was contested meanwhile by Ranjor Dauwa of Ajaigarh and, on June 17, the officers of the mutinous sepoys paid a state visit to the Nawab and agreed that pending a reference of his claim and that of his rival to the Nana Saheb of Bithoor, he should rule the country. They left Banda on June 19, taking treasure and ammunition with them. The Nawab made arrangements for the administration of the town and the district.

The Nawab was surrounded by advisers who prompted him to make himself independent. Gradually, a large number of mutineers collected around the Nawab, and his forces numbered about 12,000. By this time the Nawab had given up all thought of association with the British and entered into correspondence with other leaders of the rebellion. He began to fortify Bhooragarh Fort near Banda on the other side of the Ken river and sent forces to assist Tatya Tope in an attack on Charkhari. He also determined to capture Kalinjar which was then held by the Panna forces, but before he could do so and consolidate his position, he was attacked by Major-General Whitlock.

BRITISH RE-OCCUPATION AND ATROCITIES

General Whitlock, with a Madras column, advanced towards Banda in April 1858 and fought an action against the Nawab. The battle took place about five miles from Banda. The place for the battle had been selected by the Nawab "with consummate judgment and in every respect well-adapted for the protection of his capital". The Nawab's artillery commanded the main route on which the British force was moving. This enabled the Nawab to withdraw his guns, if hard-pressed. Such a withdrawal could be made in the numerous ravines and nalas covering his whole front, affording excellent cover.

The force with Major-General Whitlock totalled 1,899 of all descriptions. With the Nawab there was a force of 6,000, with 3,000 in reserve, all under his personal command.

The Nawab's army could not stand the fire of the British artillery, but his troops engaged in desperate resistance. There was much hand-to-hand fighting. The Nawab's losses were considerable and he had to retire. He left the field leaving behind a thousand of his men, 800 of whom were amongst the killed. The main body of the rebels fled towards Kalpi, but the Nawab himself first returned to Banda, collected his belongings and rejoined the main body of his troops at Jalalpur.

Soon after, some of the inhabitants of the city of Banda approached the British force with a flag of truce. They informed General Whitlock that the Nawab had fled and that the town had been evacuated. General Whitlock entered Banda on April 28, and found the town totally deserted and the civil station a heap of ruins.

The British troops thereafter occupied the palace of the Nawab where they found a large quantity of ammunition, much valuable property, forty thousand rupees in cash, elephants, camels and cattle with grain worth Rs.2,000. There had been great panic before

the Nawab left his palace because the British troops found, on occupying the building, that food was under preparation for the Nawab. Major General Whitlock has recorded that "the contest was a lengthened one, but Europeans and natives fought well and manfully". (Despatch no. 138, dated April 24, 1858, from Major General G. C. Whitlock, published in the N. W. P. Gazette, dated June 22, 1858, pages 227 *et seq.*)

Mr. Mayne, who had escaped to Allahabad, came back to resume charge of the district on April 29. The settlement records of 1842, the patwaris' papers and the English correspondence of the last five years, which had been handed over to the Nawab for custody, were recovered, but all other signs of British administration had disappeared.

Mr. Mayne at once set to trace cut the rebels and punish those who had been prominent in the neighbourhood of Banda itself. At page 191 of the Banda Gazetteer (1909 edition) it is stated : "The villages which had most deeply committed themselves by the plunder of their neighbours, the ill-treatment of Government officials or European fugitives, and the destruction of public property were visited with the severest punishment, their villages destroyed and their lands confiscated". By the end of the year 1858, the district was restored to complete tranquillity.

The Nawab had shown goodwill towards the British on many occasions. Thus on June 30, a party of British prisoners was brought to Banda by certain zamindars. The prisoners were most kindly treated by the Nawab and his mother. The Nawab then sent them under escort to Nagode where they reached on July 12. The Nawab had been in correspondence with Mr. Mayne at Allahabad and, on August 1, he wrote to him that he was trying to restore order by pacifying the mutineers, but could make no headway for want of men and coin. Mr. Mayne credits him with good intentions at heart, adding that "he was essentially a man of pleasure and incapable of transacting the most trifling public business ; he was entirely in the hands of those about him and he acted by their advice".*

English writers have held the Nawab responsible for the murder of Mr. Cockerell, the Sub-Divisional Officer in charge of Karvi. Mr. Cockerell was unaware of the disturbances at Banda and had, therefore, left Karvi with some of the treasure on the morning of 15th June. It has been alleged that on reaching Banda he tried to get an audience with the Nawab, but was murdered at the gateway of the courtyard and his body thrown to the dogs. In the Gazetteer at page 188, it has been observed that "it is impossible to absolve him (the Nawab) altogether from blame for Mr. Cockerell's murder and the treatment of the body".

After his flight from Banda, the Nawab joined the forces of Tatya Tope. Eventually, he took advantage of the Queen's proclamation and surrendered soon after its publication in November, 1858. The British Government granted him a pension of Rs.400 per mensem.

THE RAOS OF KARVI

The family of the Raos of Karvi which took a prominent part in the rebellion traces its ancestry to the Peshwas of Poona. Under an agreement of August 14, 1803, with the British Government, Amrit Rao, brother of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II, received a pension of Rs.7 lakhs annually from the East India Company together with a jagir in the Banda district. He took up his residence at Karvi. He was succeeded by his son, Vinayak Rao, who retained the pension, but it ceased with his death in 1853. He left two sons by adoption, Narayan Rao and

*_Banda Gazetteer_, p. 188.

Madhav Rao, but Government refused to recognise either and the jagir was resumed.

After the out-break at Banda, Narayan Rao and Madhav Rao proclaimed their rule at Karvi. The Nawab of Banda finding himself in financial difficulties on account of the large number of troops which he had to support wanted to take a loan from Narayan Rao. On November 15, the Nawab personally went to Karvi with a force of 2,000 men. There he succeeded in raising two lakhs of rupees from Narayan Rao. An agreement to divide the district of Banda between them was reached. It also provided for the assumption of the title of Peshwa by Narayan Rao. Both parties meanwhile carried on collections of revenue. The Nawab returned to Banda early in December, 1857.

Although the Nawab of Banda had been defeated and the British authority had been restored in the city of Banda, Karvi was still held by Narayan Rao. On having received re-inforcements General Whitlock marched on Karvi on June 1, 1858. The army of Peshwa Narayan Rao consisted of rabbles and before the English General entered Karvi these men fled precipitately to the hills south of Karvi. Narayan Rao and Madhav Rao thereupon surrendered unconditionally with all their guns and treasure. The treasure was enormous and was stored in the *tahkhanas* of the *Bara* at Karvi. It later became famous as the "Banda and Karvi prize-money".

Narayan Rao was later tried and sentenced to transportation for life, but the sentence was remitted by the Governor-General and he was placed under surveillance at Hazaribagh where he died in 1860. Madhav Rao was pardoned in consideration of his youth and he and his two sons were educated at Bareilly and subsequently given an annual pension of Rs.25,000.

Through the good offices of Mr. Mayne, the title and a portion of the estate were given to Srimant Rao Balwant Rao Harijog, the adopted son of Vinayak Rao's only child, a daughter. He had remained loyal and had rendered considerable assistance in the restoration of order. He died in 1902 and was succeeded by his adopted son, the latter being the son of Ram Chand Sheo Ram of the Vaishampayan family of Maharashtra Brahmans. This family had been for generations the family priests of the Jogs who came from the Konkan. The Jogs formerly bore the title of Srimant, connoting connection with the Peshwas of Poona, and Rao Balwant Rao was permitted to retain the title.

B. THE NAWAB OF FARRUKHABAD

EARLY HISTORY

At the time of the rebellion, Tafazzul Husain Khan was the Nawab of Farrukhabad. For having taken active part in the revolt he was seized by the British, was carried to Aden and thence sent across the frontier from where he made his way to Macca. This was done under peculiar circumstances which appear later in this chapter.

Tafazzul Husain Khan belonged to the branch of Bangesh Pathans and for that reason the Nawabs of this family were known as Bangesh Nawabs of Farrukhabad. The ancestor of this family, Mohammad Khan Bangesh, came from Kohat and settled in the Farrukhabad district. For some time he served Aurangzeb as a cavalry officer. After the death of Aurangzeb he rendered signal service to Farrukhsiyar who gave him the dignity of "Charhazari" (commander of four thousand) and awarded him jagirs in Kalpi and Kunch. For further services to the Delhi Court Mohammad Khan was given the title of Ghazanfar-i-Jang (lion of fight) and many other honours, with added jagirs

in the Farrukhabad district. He died at the age of 80 in 1743.

By the treaty of November 10, 1801, the Nawab Wazir of Avadh ceded to the East India Company, certain territories in Avadh, his parganas in Farrukhabad as well as the tribute of four and a half lakhs of rupees per annum paid by the Farrukhabad Nawabs to the Avadh treasury. Thereupon, Nasir Jang, the Nawab of Farrukhabad, concluded a treaty with the East India Company in June, 1802, by which he ceded his territories to the Company in return for an annual allowance of Rs.1,08,000 for himself and his dependants. What was left to the Nawab were only certain rent-free grants and jagirs. Nasir Jang was thus reduced to the position of a titular Nawab with no territorial jurisdiction.

Nasir Jang committed suicide in 1813 and was succeeded by his minor son, Khadim Husain. He died in his youth of small-pox at Delhi to be succeeded by his infant son, Tajammul Husain. It was on Tajammul Husain's death without issue in 1846 that Tafazzul Husain, his first cousin, succeeded to the title as the ninth Nawab.

THE UP-RISING AT FATEHGARH

At Fatehgarh, a few miles from Farrukhabad, was posted the 10th Native Infantry. It was commanded by Colonel Smith. As a measure of precaution, the Colonel sent the English women and children and the non-combatants, totalling some 115, to Kanpur early in June, 1857, when rumours about a possible up-rising were gaining currency. Mr. Probyn, the Collector, was also with them. On the way, some of them took shelter with a friendly zamindar and later returned to Fatehgarh ; others numbering some 65, reached Nawabganj, on the outskirts of Kanpur. Here they were seized by the mutineers, taken to Kanpur and met a sad death.

About the middle of June the Sitapur mutineers arrived at Fatehgarh. Thereupon the few Europeans that had remained on took shelter in the fort. Colonel Smith was warned by his Indian officers that they were no longer under his orders. Thereafter, the sepoys placed themselves under the Nawab as their leader. Being a representative of the former ruling dynasty of Farrukhabad, he was formally proclaimed the ruler of his ancestral principality.

Colonel Smith and his men were besieged in the fort for about a fortnight. The defenders were by now reduced to extremities and could not hold the fort further. So the Colonel evacuated it along with the rest of his companions and proceeded in three boats towards Kanpur on July 4 at 2 a.m. in the morning. The mutinous people fired on the boats on the way and many were killed. Of those who escaped some were later captured at Bithoor and met the same fate as the earlier fugitives.

Some of the fugitives had previously been captured by the Fatehgarh mutineers and these, some eight or nine women and children, were kept as prisoners in an out-house of the Nawab. These, along with some Europeans captured from hiding places in the city, were after some days put to death on July 23, against the wishes of the Nawab. It has been suggested that "this senseless murder of women and children seems here, as elsewhere, to have been induced by the absurd fancy that the extirpation of the small British colony in India was the extirpation of the whole British race".*

THE NAWAB'S RULE

The Nawab governed the district for seven months. On June 18, he had formed a national Government. His territory, which

*Farrukhabad Gazetteer (1911), p. 162.

included not only the district of Farrukhabad but parts of Etah also, was divided into two great shires, eastern and western, and placed in charge of nazims or collectors. Courts were also established, the highest being the privy council which heard appeals. Under the privy council there was a court of three muftis which decided all civil matters. Minor criminal cases were tried by tahsildars. The tahsil and police circle machinery of the British Government was retained. Rent and revenue cases were also tried by tahsildars according to the procedure obtaining in British times.

The main source of income was the land-revenue as in British days. In order to supplement it heavy octroi duties were imposed. Excise duty and tolls on ferries were amongst the other sources of income to the national exchequer.

The nationalist army originally consisted of the 41st Native Infantry from Sitapur and some other troops from that station. In addition a party of cavalry was raised locally. All totalled some 2,200 men. Later, the Nawab added eleven regiments of infantry and cavalry and an artillery of 200 men with 24 guns. Agha Husain was the Commander-in-Chief.

Thus, for seven months the Nawab carried on the administration. The English historians have described him as a rather weak ruler, but they have also been fair to him by adding that his administration was better than that of other local rulers in the adjoining districts.

RESTORATION OF BRITISH AUTHORITY AND REPRISALS

In the meanwhile the British authority was being gradually re-established on all sides. In September, 1857, Delhi came back into the hands of the British and towards the end of November, 1857, Lucknow was relieved by Sir Colin Campbell. After the relief of Lucknow, the Commander-in-Chief had returned to Kanpur to meet the Gwalior Contingent under Tatya Tope. On the defeat of the latter, he thought of reducing Fatehgarh. A British force from Delhi was already on its way to Fatehgarh, and Sir Colin now advanced on the city by the Grand Trunk Road from Kanpur. The Nawab sent his whole force to oppose the British advance, but this was defeated and routed by the Commander-in-Chief on January 2, 1858, near Khudagunj. One of the Nawab's army commanders, by name Thakur Pande, was slain on the field of battle. He was popularly known as Collector Thakur Pande because he was in charge of the administration of half of the territories under the style of Collector. On Thakur Pande being killed, the survivors came back to Farrukhabad.

The British force continued its march on Farrukhabad, but before its arrival the Nawab and Prince Firoz Shah and others crossed the Ganga and found a temporary refuge at the court of Khan Bahadur Khan at Bareilly.

The Commander-in-Chief entered the fort at Fatehgarh on January 3, 1858, and found in it Government property worth over Rs.10 lakhs consisting of immense stores of seasoned wood (for the use of the gun-carriage factory which the British had formerly established at Fatehgarh), guns of all calibres, clothing, tents and ordnance stores of all kinds. The Nawab had established in the fort a gun, shot and shell foundry as well as a powder manufactory, but when he evacuated the place none thought of blowing up the place to prevent these valuable things falling into the hands of the British.

After the occupation of the fort, a force was sent out to the neighbouring areas to catch and hang the people. At each halting place a court of summary jurisdiction was held which condemned to death scores of men for their supposed atrocities at Fatehgarh in the

previous June. The prisoners were hung upon the branches of trees. One such mass execution has been described by Forbes-Mitchell. He says that in the town of Palamau which had been a hot bed of rebellion, the Civil Commissioner, guarded by the military, held his court at the police station. A great number of arrested persons were brought up and according to Forbes-Mitchell "they were marched up in batches and shortly after marched back again to a large tree of the banyan species which stood in the centre of the square and hung thereon. This went on from about 3 o'clock in the evening till day-light the following morning when it was reported that there was no more room on the tree, and by that time there were one hundred and thirty men hanging from its branches. A grim spectacle indeed."*

The castle in which the Nawab had been living was razed to the ground. Its site is now occupied by the tahsil building and the town-hall. His wife, Bilqis Zamania Begum was deprived of all her belongings. She passed her miserable days near the site of the palace itself. Several male members of the Nawab's family paid with their lives.

REWARD ANNOUNCED FOR NAWAB'S CAPTURE

As for the Nawab himself the Governor-General announced a reward of Rs.10,000 for his capture and published the following proclamation in the Government Gazette (N. W. P.) of May 4, 1858 :

"27th April, 1858.—No. 201.—The following Proclamation issued by the Government of India in the Foreign Department is published for general information :

PROCLAMATION

24th April, 1858.—No 765.- It is hereby notified that a reward of Rs 10,000 will be paid to any person who shall deliver alive at any British Military Post or Camp, the rebel Tuffuzzool Hosein Khan, Ex-Nawab Raees of Farruckabad.

It is further notified that in addition to this reward, a free pardon will be given to any mutineer or deserter or to any rebel, other than those named in Government Proclamation no. 476 of the 1st instant, who may so deliver up the said Tuffuzzool Hosein Khan.

By order of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General of India.

G. F. EDMONSTONE,

Secretary to Government of India,

with the Governor-General.

Published by order of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General.

W. MUIR,

Secretary to Government, N. W. P."

The Nawab and the other defeated leaders of the rebellion who had been driven out of their home districts were hemming in a narrow region of the Terai on the Nepal border. Sir Colin Campbell was in their pursuit with plans to push them further north into Nepal and at the mercy of Jang Bahadur who had no sympathy with them. Sir Colin accomplished his task and returned to Lucknow in January, 1859. But in the meanwhile a number of nationalist leaders surrendered, the Nawab of Farrukhabad being one of them. He surrendered to Major Barrow on promise that his life would be spared.

The Nawab was tried before a Special Commissioner on various counts, the main among which was that of rebellion and waging war against the British Government and acting as a leader and instigator in revolt. He was convicted and sentenced to death and all his property was adjudged to be confiscated. But it came out at the trial that before his surrender a letter had been written to him by Major Barrow, the Special Commissioner with the Camp of the Commander-in-Chief, in which he was invited to surrender. In this letter the Nawab was told that pardon had been extended to all who had not personally committed the murder of British subjects and that if he had not personally committed the murder of any British subject he might surrender without apprehension.

**Reminiscences*, pp. 169-70.

The Government condemned and disavowed this act of Major Barrow, but forbore, in consequence of it, from carrying out the capital sentence on condition that Tafazzul Husain should immediately quit British territories for ever. He was carried to Aden and sent across the frontier in the direction of Macca. He died at Macca on February 19, 1882.

As regards the Treaty of 1802, to which a reference has been made earlier, it was held that, as between the British Government and the Nawab, the treaty was cancelled by Tafazzul Husain's rebellion, but that this breach of engagement by Tafazzul Husain did not of itself affect the rights of third parties recognised or created by the treaty. The pension guaranteed by one of the articles, and the property and annual payments guaranteed by certain others, were, therefore, resumed and a small subsistence allowance was granted to those who were dependent on these payments and had no other means of support, provided they took no part in, and gave no encouragement to, rebellion. Also certain other pensions and rent-free lands and jagirs were continued to the holders provided they were not implicated in the rebellion and provided further that they did not hold their pensions or lands on condition of service the performance of which was no longer possible.

Forbes-Mitchell in his *Reminiscences* has, it may be mentioned here, erroneously written that after the re-capture of Farrukhabad the Nawab was arrested, bound hand and foot, and carried by coolies on a common country charpoy. Some sort of crude trial was held and he was sentenced to be hanged. Forbes-Mitchell has averred that the poor Nawab "was first smeared over with pig's fat, flogged by the sweepers and then hanged. This was done by the orders of the Civil Commissioner. Both Sir Colin Campbell and Sir William Peel were said to have protested against the barbarity, but this I don't know for certain."* This is apparently a case of mistaken identity; the writer has confused the Nawab himself with some one out of the members of his family who too were, in courtesy, known as Nawabs and some of whom had in fact been hanged on the re-capture of Fatehgarh.

THE STRANGE CASE OF NIYAZ MUHAMMAD

One of the rebel leaders, Niyaz Muhammad, who neither surrendered nor was captured on the restoration of British authority, had an extraordinary future. For many years he evaded apprehension by taking to a life of wandering in the course of which he visited Macca a number of times. He later took service with the Nawab of Junagarh. In 1872 the Nawab came to Bombay where the Governor-General was staying. Niyaz Muhammad, who was with the Nawab, was recognised, arrested, tried and condemned to death. In appeal before the High Court he pleaded that as a subject of the Rampur State he had owed no allegiance to the British Government. This plea was made on the ground that the Penal Code, which made the waging of war against the Sovereign an offence, irrespective of the nationality of the accused, was not in force at the time when Niyaz Muhammad had taken part in the rebellion. The Chief Justice, dissenting from his brother Judges, held that the plea was good. The majority of the Bench hearing the appeal, however, held a contrary opinion, and so the judgment on Niyaz Muhammad was confirmed by the majority view. At the same time, in view of this plea, the High Court commuted his sentence to transportation for life.†

**Reminiscences*, p. 169.

†Gazetteer of the Farrukhabad District (1911), pp. 170-171.

ANNEXURE

LETTER OF THE NAWAB OF BANDA TO RAO SAHEB AT KALPI

(Translation)

"23rd *Rajab, Samvat* 1914. 'Son-like' Ali Bahadur salutes 'father-like' (Rao Saheb) with his head on his feet. With your blessings the servant has to convey the following news with regard to 20th Rajab (March 7, 1858) at Banda.

A letter addressed to Srimant Rajmanya Rajshri Narayan Rao Saheb was received from Peshji on your behalf. It has been despatched through a messenger. The reply when received will be sent to you.

I think, as already submitted by me, the servant is in the know of the whole position regarding the management of the ghat at Rajapur, but he is unable to write it. What Ramji and Legho jamadar have told you must also have come to your notice, who is like a father to me. In order that the dispute may not develop further without your orders and information when the mismanagement of the ghat at Rajapur Mau is known, orders may be given to the servant.

Bhagcheedana and other ghats have been managed well, but the rajas and *raises* of that place are of the opinion that there is always the danger of the British army coming through Rajapur and other routes. It does not, therefore, appear proper to leave this place unguarded even for a second.

By the grace of God and the sacred majesty of the Maharaja, Rajshri Tatya Tope has won a great victory at Charkhari. This makes us sure that victory will be won at the fort also. All sardars are there, but among them Fateh Nabis and Jawan Mard specially appeared to be active. With this victory at Charkhari, the rule of our Government will be established in the whole of Bundelkhand.

Your servant hopes that you are gaining in eminence and prosperity as the good of your servant lies in the enhancement of your prosperity. Considering the household of the servant as your own you, who are father-like to me, have always been kind to me and the honour of my family has been bestowed by yourself.

As soon as the order, dated Phagun Sudi (February 28, 1858) is issued, all the work here will be done with your advice. You may not have anxiety about anything. With the grace of your feet, who is father-like to me, everything will be all right. The arrangements made by you may be maintained as at present. Your servant is free from anxiety in this behalf. It is the duty of the servant to intimate all the happenings on this side. After this whatever orders are given will be fully complied with. This is what I have to submit.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

BABU KUNWAR SINGH, THE HERO OF BIHAR

SECRET PREPARATIONS.

HIS INFLUENCE AND ACTIVITIES.

BATTLES WITH THE BRITISH : BANDA AND AZAMGARH.

RETURN TO JAGDISHPUR AND DEATH.

HIS CHARACTER.

> *"And it is said of him* that he severed his injured hand with one stroke of his own sword and offered it to the holy waters of the Ganga."*

SECRET PREPARATIONS

As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the revolt was a country-wide endeavour to throw off the yoke of foreign domination. In this effort everyone—young or old—played his part as best as he could.

Babu Kunwar Singh was a respected landlord of Jagdishpur in Bihar. He had large and valuable estates in the district of Shahabad. His tenants paid him a total rent of no less than Rs.3 lakhs per annum out of which he paid about Rs.1½ lakhs as land revenue to the Government. When the mutiny broke out, he had counted 80 years of his age. Still, forgetting the demand of weariness, he too donned his battle-dress and took out the sword from the scabbard to participate in the nation's urge for freedom. History is proud to recall the gallant encounters which he had with the British forces in many a battle. Even English writers have, in their love of hero-worship, paid him glowing tributes for his military genius and deeds of valour.

As late as June 14, 1857, the Commissioner of the Division, Mr. Taylor, wrote to the Government of Bengal that "many people have sent me letters imputing disloyalty and disaffection to several of the zamindars, especially Babu Kunwar Singh. My personal friendship for him and the attachment he had always shown me enabled me confidently to contradict the report". Even the Magistrate of Shahabad felt the same way. He said that the Commissioner had unflinching faith in the fidelity of B. Kunwar Singh and so he saw no reason to suspect his activities.

According to Sir George Trevelyan, had Kunwar Singh been only 40 years of age, the defence of Arrah would have become more formidable, and the Englishmen

*Kunwar Singh.

should consider themselves fortunate that old age had reduced his military strength to a great extent.

Despite the wholesome confidence which Kunwar Singh enjoyed, the Commissioner, in order to allay the fear of other officers, who regarded Kunwar Singh as a great rebel, sent the Deputy Collector of Arrah—Syed Azimuddin—to watch his activities. In furtherance of the same desire, or rather to take him into custody, he invited him to Patna for a conference. Since, however, confidence in the British had suffered a setback on account of their imprisoning the Wahabi leaders whom they had similarly called to a conference, the game was not a secret one and Babu Kunwar Singh politely declined the invitation and sent word that, due to his age and sickness, he was unable to undertake the journey. It is said that he had determined to oppose if he were called by force.

The preparations which he had made in his estate were done in such a masterly manner that in spite of the confidential enquiries that were made by the authorities, nothing came to light which could point to preparations of any sort. On the contrary, the enquiries led to the belief that his subjects had no cause of complaint or grudge against the English.

Kunwar Singh was, at the material time, a financially broken person—he was negotiating for a loan of 20 lakhs of rupees in order to clear off his debts and this money was to be gradually liquidated from the proceeds of his estate through the Collector of Shahabad. Apart from the smaller amounts which had been advanced to him, Kunwar Singh could not collect the entire amount that he needed. It was in this state of his troubles that the Suddar Board of Revenue sent instructions through the Commissioner of Patna that, unless he managed to secure the entire loan within a month, he would be left without British protection. Some negotiations for a loan of rupees ten lakhs were started with Narayan Rao and Madhav Rao (sons of Vinayak Rao), the wealthy Raos of Karvi,† in the district of Banda, but the transaction did not materialise. He was now in a serious predicament. Kaye has remarked: "The support of Government was suddenly withdrawn. There is but one thing that could have kept the old Rajput free from the entanglements that surrounded him and that one thing was such aid from Government as would have enabled him to end his days in quietude and peace, and to leave an honourable name behind him in the district. But instead of this, he was, like many others, driven to despair."‡

The British authorities felt that he had dragged himself to the misery of debt because of the huge amount he had spent on constructing a temple, and that he deserved no sympathy in consequence.

HIS INFLUENCE AND ACTIVITIES

Whatever his financial position, he wielded great influence over his ryots who were his staunch supporters. So, when the banner of revolt was raised by him, he was not without a long train of followers. Wherever he went, he was welcome and people joined him and his cause. As a true Rajput, once he had come to the battle-field, he did not know to retreat or surrender.

The area of operations of Kunwar Singh was the whole of Bihar and the eastern districts of Uttar Pradesh. He was in touch with Nana Saheb. The men of the 40th Indian Infantry and the Bhojpuri soldiers (on leave) were the prominent members of his army fighting bravely under his leadership.

†These two brothers also took a prominent part in the rebellion—*see* Chapter 34, Section A, last sub-section.
‡Kaye, Vol. III, pp 99-100



KUNWAR SINGH

'Apart from his debts and his insubordination to British rule, Koer Singh was a fine noble-looking old man. His manners were at once dignified and courteous, and bore the stamp of real nobility. . . . He had been a great sportsman, and was much liked by the Europeans generally.' Mr. [illegible], Civil Surgeon, quoted by Giberne Sieveking in *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*



ARRAH (BOYLE'S) HOUSE

It was in this bungalow that the English had taken shelter. Until its relief, it was heroically defended by Herwald Wake, the Magistrate of Arrah, whose picture appears on the next page.



HERWALD WAKE

The defence of Arrah was one of the most remarkable feats of Indian history (Sir Vincent Eyre). For one full week two civilian officers, with the aid of only 80 Sikhs and English, successfully withstood the attack of two to three thousand men on the small bungalow (Boyle's House) they had to defend. Eventually they were relieved by a force under Major (afterwards Sir Vincent) Eyre. The hero of the defence was Mr. Herwald Wake, the Magistrate of Arrah. He lived long after the mutiny and died in 1901, aged 72.



KUNWAR SINGH WITH HIS ATTENDANTS

[illegible] of October 13, 1857)

[illegible] reported as follows in its above issue [illegible] Arrah [illegible] noble stand for seven days [illegible] at the head of [illegible] disciplined sepoys and insurgents [illegible] the garrison [illegible]

The news of the country's rule having been taken over by the rebellious leaders at Delhi reached all parts of the country. Thereupon accelerated preparations were set on foot for up-risings in other parts of the country. Patna was the centre of the Wahabi activities intended to oust the English. The authorities on their part were determined to curb the movement even by employing repressive measures. These caused the Patna revolt on July 3. This was followed by the uprising of the 7th, the 8th and the 40th Native Infantries at Danapur on July 25. Malleson wrote that these soldiers were openly propagating that the Englishmen were depriving the Indian sepoys of their arms and ammunition and so they should be killed.* General Lloyd was, however, able to defeat these mutinous sepoys and restore order with the result that the rebel sepoys crossed the Sone to Arrah.

BATTLES WITH THE BRITISH : BANDA AND AZAMGARH

The Indian sepoys on being defeated at Danapur entered the city of Arrah on July 27. They broke open the jail and released about 400 prisoners. Then at the treasury they possessed themselves of Rs.85,000. Kunwar Singh who was keenly watching these activities seized the opportunity and met the rebels. The bungalow of Mr. Boyle† was surrounded, and on July 30 a battle took place on the bank of the Ganga between the men of Kunwar Singh and Capt. Dunbar in which the latter's army was totally defeated. Capt. Dunbar was also killed in action. As soon as the news reached Major Eyre, he came with his troops to a village near Arrah and an action was fought on August 3. The English had the upper hand on account of the timely receipt of reinforcements, and Kunwar Singh was defeated.

On this defeat, Kunwar Singh withdrew himself to his home-town of Jagdishpur where he was supported by the local rebels and the Bhojpuri soldiers who were on furlough. He raised his military strength to 3,000. A battle then took place at Dilawar, a village nearby, between his army and the men of Major Eyre on August 12, when too the British gained supremacy.

Kunwar Singh was now forced to take shelter with the men of the 40th Native Infantry in the hilly tracts of Shahabad where he again organised himself. From there he proceeded towards Sasram, from where he went to Rohtas along with his younger brother, Amar Singh.

Sasram and Rohtas were ready beds for sowing the seeds of rebellion as the Pathan residents of these places had already been disaffected on account of the atrocious treatment meted out to them by the authorities.

From these places Kunwar Singh proceeded towards Rewa. On his way he was reinforced by the rebels of Ramgarh and Danapur and now he had an army of 5,000. In Rewa, he organised the rebellion through the Thakurs of Shahajpur. Persons who helped Kunwar Singh in Rewa were Hashmat Ali and Har Chand Raj. However, the conditions in Rewa were not very favourable. The Raja of Rewa had been persuaded by Osborne, the Political Agent, to oppose the rebels. Finding little response from the local ruler, Kunwar Singh had to leave this place, and according to Dr. Sen "if Shah Kabiruddin was correctly informed, the old chieftain was at this juncture deserted by the majority of the sepoys and had with him only five hundred followers". During the month of September, Kunwar Singh remained in the Mirzapur-Rewa region and kept the authorities at both the places upset.

*Page 137 of *Jiwaniyan*.

†He was a Railway Engineer. His bungalow was fortified by the authorities as a place of defence where Europeans could in the last resort take refuge.

Jagdishpur, on being abandoned by Kunwar Singh, fell to the lot of Englishmen. It met the most retaliatory treatment at the hands of Major Eyre. He burnt the magnificent temple in constructing which Kunwar Singh had rendered himself insolvent. The palace and other important buildings of the town were levelled to the ground. The temple was demolished "because it is known that the Brahmans have instigated him to rebellion". The destruction of the temple was disapproved by the Commander-in-Chief, who described the Major's action as a "mistaken view of the duties of a Commander at the present crisis".

The vengeance of the British was not confined to the altar of God and the abode of man. Many of the rebellious population were caught and hanged. Even wounded sepoys were hanged in revenge, it is said, for similar treatment of the British at Arrah.

Banda.

On September 29, Kunwar Singh reached Banda with 2,000 soldiers and was received cordially by the Nawab. The citizens also warmly welcomed him and assisted him in organising his troops. Numerous soldiers from Avadh came to join him. In the meanwhile conditions at Delhi had changed. The rebellion had been quelled and British authority was re-appearing. This necessitated a change of his plans. Kunwar Singh now proceeded with his men to Kalpi, arriving there on October 10, 1857. He was in communication with the Gwalior Contingent. On November 3, Tatya Tope was defeated at Kalpi whereupon Kunwar Singh moved towards Lucknow. He was welcomed there by the Begum of Avadh who presented a robe of honour to him. *Farman* for Azamgarh was also conferred upon him.

He was present also at the second battle of Kanpur which the Gwalior Contingent under the leadership of Tatya Tope fought against the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, in November, 1857.

Azamgarh.

The English activities being now centred at Lucknow, Mirzapur, Rewa and Kanpur, Kunwar Singh took the opportunity of pouncing upon Atrauli, a village 20 miles from Azamgarh. Col. Milman was unable to meet the onslaught with his small force of 286 men of the 37th Native Infantry, 60 men of the 4th Madras Horsemen and two guns. Kunwar Singh fought the enemy on guerilla pattern and forced Milman towards the forests. Milman and his men fled to Azamgarh for refuge. He wrote to Varanasi, Allahabad and Lucknow for help. The succour came from Varanasi and Ghazipur. Now Col. Dames with 350 men attacked Kunwar Singh on March 27, 1858. In this combat also, Kunwar Singh proved his superiority. His next plan was to incite the people of Varanasi and Allahabad to rise again.

In the meanwhile, however, Lord Mark Kerr was sent from Allahabad to relieve Azamgarh. He arrived there on April 6 with 22 officers and 444 soldiers and attacked Kunwar Singh from the left. At the material time, Kunwar Singh and his men were in the town while their opponents were in the fort. Kunwar Singh fought a series of rear-guard actions showing a remarkable military genius in their organization. Malleson writes about him : "He kept Douglas at bay till he had secured two lines of retreat for his main columns, which he had divided. He then fell back leisurely, and though many of his men were cut up, they maintained to the end of the day their determined attitude. As soon as Douglas's pursuit—continued for four or five miles—relaxed, the two divided columns re-united, and took up a position for the night".*

*Page 265, Dr. Sen

The strength of Lord Mark Kerr was later supplemented by Sir Edward Lugard. Kunwar Singh's army was no match to this combination and so he decided to return to Bihar. On April 15, 1858, he was attacked by General Lugard. By now the old warrior had exhausted much of his physical strength and his men had become disorganised. He now planned to reach Ghazipur across the Tons. Near the river, an action was fought and the valour shown by Kunwar Singh in this battle is treasured in history. Two British Generals were killed. General Lugard then ordered General Douglas to attack him with 7,000 men. There was a fight on April 17 and Kunwar Singh again forced the opponent's army to retreat and came to Ghazipur *via* Sikandarpur.

RETURN TO JAGDISHPUR AND DEATH

Kunwar Singh now wanted to return to his home town by crossing the Ganga. When he reached the shores, his secret servicemen informed him that he was being followed by General Douglas and others, and they had in fact already arrived near the river. To countermand this imminent danger, Kunwar Singh got a rumour spread that on account of shortage of boats he and his men would cross the river on elephants. To lend credence to the rumour, he diverted some of his men on elephants towards the west. The trick worked well. Thinking that Kunwar Singh and his men were going away on elephants, the English followed the fleet. In the meanwhile, during the night, Kunwar Singh set off on boats with his men. When, in the early hours of the morning, General Douglas came to know of the trick played upon him, he reached the Ghat and began to shower bullets. But by now the entire army of Kunwar Singh had reached the other side. He was himself in the last boat. It is said that a bullet struck his left wrist which he at once severed by his right hand and placed the detached limb in the sacred current of the Ganga as his last pious offering.

Thus, after having defeated the British in many actions, Kunwar Singh managed to reach Jagdishpur on April 22, 1858. Though he was in intense pain on account of his severed hand, Kunwar Singh met his people with great ovation and warmness. He was shocked to hear of the atrocities which his dear people at Jagdishpur had suffered at the hands of the British. His brother Amar Singh and his followers were there. Like a brave General, as he was, Kunwar Singh lost no time in setting himself to task again. He posted his men at all sides of the town for its defence. The English had already gained superiority over the nationalist forces at other places and an attack on Jagdishpur was for them a matter of a few hours.

It took less time than anticipated. On April 23, 1858, siege was laid on Jagdishpur by Capt. Le Grand and his men who comprised Europeans and Sikhs. Seeing the formidable strength of the enemy, Kunwar Singh retreated with his men to the forests and awaited an attack there. Le Grand followed him and made an assault. Kunwar Singh met the challenge from all sides for which Grand and his men were not prepared. The English army lost its morale and lost the battle too. Le Grand himself was killed. Out of the 200 British soldiers, only 80 returned alive. Of this number, 35 had fled earlier from the scene of action.

After having given this smashing defeat to the English, Kunwar Singh announced himself as the Ruler of Jagdishpur on April 23, 1858. But his wound had become septic and his condition was serious. He rapidly deteriorated and breathed his last on April 26* with the halo of a great General and a greater patriot.

*According to Col Corfield, his death took place on 24th April—*see* his letter to Col. Birch, dated 2nd May, 1858, quoted by Dr Sen, foot-note, p. 263.

HIS CHARACTER

Kunwar Singh was an extraordinary man. He was not only brave, but kind-hearted too. Mr. Taylor, the Commissioner of Patna, wrote about Kunwar Singh : "A man of noble and ancient family—a generous and popular landlord much loved by his tenantry and respected throughout the district both by natives and Europeans".

He lived and died a hero. During the time it fell to him to assume the reins of government he showed himself a far-seeing statesman and a successful administrator. He was a philanthropist as well as a man of ideas. The British commanders have candidly acknowledged that he was a clean fighter who never sullied his hands with innocent blood and protected British women and children. At Arrah, Kunwar Singh had several Eurasian families in his power, but he left them all uninjured on his departure. It has been recorded that he did not participate in any of the "atrocities which were generally committed by the rebels".*

The Indian soldiers of Captain Le Grand's defeated army consisted mostly of Sikhs. After the defeat, they were all captured. Kunwar Singh treated them with respect and sent them to their respective places without causing them any harm or humiliation. This was proof of his intense love for the country which he carried in his heart and which prevented him from discriminating even against those of his country-men who had preferred to side with the British and fight against him

Did we think victory great ?
So it is. But now it seems to me,
When it cannot be helped,
That defeat is great ;
That death and dismay are great.

*Dr. J. J. Halls in *Two months at Arrah* p. 86.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

THE REVOLT AT OTHER PLACES

A. OTHER PLACES IN NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.
- VARANASI.
- ALLAHABAD—MAULVI LIAQAT ALI.
- AGRA.
- AZAMGARH.
- GORAKHPUR—MOHAMMAD HASAN.
- FATEHPUR.
- ETAWAH.
- ALIGARH.
- ROHILKHAND — KHAN BAHADUR KHAN.

B. OTHER PLACES IN AVADH .
- FAIZABAD—MAULVI AHMAD ULLAH SHAH.
- SITAPUR.

C. BIHAR.

D. THE PUNJAB.

E. RAJPUTANA.

F. CENTRAL INDIA :
- GWALIOR.
- INDORE.
- SHAHZADA FIROZ SHAH.
- OTHERS.

G. BOMBAY PRESIDENCY.

H. BENGAL AND ORISSA.

I. ASSAM.

J. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

A. OTHER PLACES IN NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES

VARANASI

In 1857, Varanasi was a place of strategic importance from the military point of view. It lay on the line of communication between Patna and Allahabad. Moreover, there were at that time residing at Varanasi some princes of the Delhi Royal Family and the British Government were not unnaturally apprehensive that these nobles might exploit the situation to the detriment of Government.

There were then numerous other nobles exiled from their home-land and living in town as State prisoners. Coupled with all these factors, there was also the consideration that, as a city sacred to the Hindus, any untoward incidents occurring here were bound to have, as in fact they did have, far-reaching repercussions throughout the country.

The civil officers of the station were men of experience and ability. The Commissioner was Mr. Tucker, a man of deep religion. Relying upon the goodness of God he used to drive, during the gathering storm, through the city unarmed; the driving whip which he carried was neither an instrument of attack nor defence. The Collector, Mr. Lind, was a man of balanced judgment. Mr. Gubbins, the Judge, was tactful and resolute. Brigadier Ponsoby, the officer in charge of the military establishment, was courageous, though not quite steady. The 37th Native Infantry was posted at the station along with a Sikh Regiment and an Irregular Cavalry.

These wise officers, if left to themselves, would have saved Varanasi. In fact the Commissioner had written an optimistic note to the Governor-General saying that his game was "to keep in good spirits". And pretty well he played his game until a new situation was created by the arrival of General Neill on June 3, 1857.

When the news of Meerut and Delhi reached the Governor-General he summoned Neill* and his Fusiliers from Madras to Calcutta. By that time Kanpur and Lucknow had not arisen and the Governor-General decided to send Neill to reinforce those places, via Varanasi and Allahabad. It was thus that Neill had come to Varanasi. A relentless, offensive and short-sighted man, he created, no sooner than he arrived, an ugly situation and up-set the steady atmosphere of the station.

Mutiny had by now broken out at Lucknow and on June 4, came the news of the up-rising at Azamgarh where the sepoys had taken possession of the treasure and, though some of them had escorted their officers to a safe place, they would not fight their brother sepoys. Brigadier Ponsoby was unnerved lest the example of Azamgarh might be followed at Varanasi. He communicated to Neill that as a precaution he would be disarming the 37th Native Infantry on the morning the next day. This was on the 4th. But Neill, in his foolhardiness, pressed the Brigadier that the disarming should be done that very afternoon. Immediate arrangements were made accordingly and a parade was assembled at 5 o'clock without the sepoys knowing what it was for. The disarming was to be done with the help of the Sikhs and the cavalry-men, who were considered reliable, and the European soldiers whom Neill had brought with him, but these had not yet arrived at the parade ground. An order for the piling of arms was then given, and six companies in succession silently surrendered their weapons.

It was at this moment that the European soldiers came up with cartridges and grape-shots. This caused an apprehension amongst the disarmed sepoys who thought that the Europeans would now attack and kill them. Brigadier Ponsoby tried to re-assure them but without success. Some of them ran to re-arm themselves for defence. The Europeans then opened fire immediately. It was in the midst of these happenings that the Sikhs and the irregular cavalry-men also came on the parade ground and were bewildered as they had not been taken into confidence about the purpose for which the 37th had been called on parade. So they also began shooting. In the confusion that

*He was going to fight in the China war, but on account of the up-risings at Meerut and Delhi the expedition was given up

prevailed, Brig. Ponsoby, though the senior officer on the spot, was superseded by Neill who took over the command. The sepoys were soon suppressed—and this was not difficult for most of them were unarmed—but it is on record that the Governor-General shared the Commissioner's view that the disarming affair had been grossly mismanaged.

It appears that in the general confusion there was indiscriminate firing by the Europeans in which the Sikhs were also hit. Thereupon the Sikhs joined the sepoys. It is said that together they attacked the English artillery thrice. This was probably the only prominent occasion in the history of 1857 when the Sikhs sided with Indian sepoys—Hindus and Mohammedans—and fought against the British. Later, however, the Sikhs were won over by the English officers through the loyalty of their leader Surat Singh. The cause of the sepoys at Varanasi was lost, but most of them retired fighting out of the field and spread in the neighbouring areas.

After the failure of the sepoys on June 4, wholesale arrests followed. It was noteworthy that at Varanasi no English blood was spilt. In the whole province of Varanasi, not a single English life was taken. The people, far from acting in revenge, cordially bid farewell to the fleeing English, themselves assisting sometimes to yoke the animals to their carriages.

General Neill now embarked on his notorious career of atrocities which have been condemned even by English writers. He organised detachments of the English and the Sikhs and these were sent to the neighbouring villages of Varanasi. Anybody whom they saw was cut down or hanged. Such a large number of men were hanged that the scaffolds that were erected could not serve the purpose. Trees were then used as scaffolds and on the several branches of each tree people were hanged. This went on incessantly night and day.

One of the foul devices adopted was to take prisoners on elephants under trees and then to tie their necks to the branches. The elephant was then moved and the corpse hung by the branch. The more gruesome part of this affair was the fact that English soldiers adopted this method to derive amusement. Not only that, prisoners were hanged in various sorts of figures ; some were hung in the shape of the figure '8', some in the shape of '9'—*History of the Indian Mutiny*, by Kaye and Malleson, volume II, page 107.

Not satisfied by these atrocities, which were on a mass scale, the English officers adopted another method of destruction. They razed entire villages to the ground. A village was first set on fire from all sides. Those trying to escape were shot. In this way harmless people, invalids, women and children, the blind and the lame, were burnt in the mass of flames. The fires were so quickly lighted and skilfully arranged that very few had chance of escape. Those who tried to escape were shot—*Indian Mutiny* by Charles Ball, volume I, pages 243-44.

It must also be recorded to the utter shame of Neill that on one occasion some boys, who perhaps in mere sport had flaunted the rebel colours and gone about beating tom-toms, were tried and sentenced to death.

Author after author has condemned Neill for his doings. Sir John Kaye writes : "Already our military officers were hunting down criminals of all kinds and hanging them up with as little compunction as though they had been pariah-dogs or jackals or vermin of a baser kind". Many of the writers were so disgusted that one of them wrote saying that it was better not to write anything about Neill's revenge.

Although the rising was nipped in the bud, yet the news that this city had risen spread like lightning all over northern India. In the result, different military stations, which were waiting for the turn of events, began to rise in succession. Another wide-spread

repercussion was that the sepoys of the Bengal Army, who had not yet mutinied and who had some faith in the British Government, now came to realize the bitter truth that even the most faithful of them was not safe against the faithlessness of the British people in India. The atrocities of Neill, both at Varanasi and subsequently at Allahabad, were the direct cause of the massacres at Kanpur and the fierce fights at Lucknow.

ALLAHABAD

In spite of the premature out-burst at Meerut, the central region comprising Allahabad, Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, the other districts of Avadh and eastern Uttar Pradesh kept to the time schedule which had been fixed for the general up-rising, namely May 31, 1857. In this connection the following letter sent by Nana Saheb to Maulvi Liaqat Ali, the leader of the Allahabad revolutionaries, is of significance :

"The 31st May was fixed as the scheduled date to start a country-wide war for 'Swarajya'. This schedule was prepared by the brain-trust of the revolution. England, together with other European nations, is waging war against our neighbourly country China. On the 7th May, nearly four-fifths of the British forces have sailed for China, leaving the defence of the territories administered by the East India Company in India almost entirely on the Indian section of the British army. This east-ward movement of British troops has left in India nearly two hundred British officers and only ten companies of English soldiers of the Irish Fusilier class and others. The Indian soldiers—Hindu and Muslim—to a man had pledged their whole-hearted support to the cause of 'Swarajya'. Thus you would see that in this golden setting of opportunities, the day of retribution was fixed for the 31st of May. The foolhardiness of the Meerut patriots has greatly injured our cause. The Governor-General has sent sos to Malaya to divert the major portion of the China-bound English soldiers back to India. However, we in this region have pledged to stick to the schedule. We are firing the first cannon shots at Kanpur on 31st of May. Lucknow, Faizabad, Banaras and Allahabad are to follow immediately. May God make our plans succeed and our country free from the groaning yoke of Firangees".*

With all the roads leading from Calcutta towards Delhi and the Punjab, passing through the city of Allahabad which being situated at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, with the grand fort of Akbar near the confluence, the station was a strategic place from the military point of view and had its own importance.

Preparations for the rebellion were made with care and caution leaving the British officers completely in the dark. When the news of Meerut arrived, there was not a single European soldier at Allahabad. Only the 6th Sepoy Regiment and about 200 men of a Sikh regiment from Ferozpur were at the station then. Later, the Avadh Cavalry was brought to reinforce the place.

The rising took place on 6th June. There being no British soldier at Allahabad, the fort was entirely in the hands of Indian sepoys. The out-break started with the sepoys of the 6th Regiment coming out with their swords from their barracks. The Avadh Cavalrymen refused to draw their swords against their own country-men—the sepoys in the opposite camp.

The treasury with 30 lakhs of rupees was captured by the rebels on June 14. The same day in the afternoon a procession was

*Sir John Kaye *Confidential Records of the East India Company*, volume IX, pp. 186-87.

taken out and the nationalist flag hoisted with due ceremony at the Police Station and the multitude saluted the flag.

Since the Sikhs who were in the fort did not co-operate with the outside rebels, the fort remained in the hands of the British. But for this event, the situation would have gone completely out of control of the authorities.

The rising at Allahabad was a people's rising. Even old military pensioners enrolled themselves as volunteers. Kaye says: "And with them went on not only the sepoys, who a day before had licked our hands, but the superannuated pensioners of the Company's native army who though feeble for action were earnest in their efforts to stimulate others to deeds of cowardice and cruelty".* The shopkeepers, too, did not lag behind. According to General Neill, "the majority of the chief merchants and others have shown the worst spirit towards us. Many of them have taken active part against us". Hindus and Muslims, young and old, soldiers and citizens, all had arisen. The whole Allahabad shook with tremor. Kaye wrote: "For, not only in the districts beyond the Ganges, but in those lying between the two rivers, the rural population had arisen . . . . and soon there was scarcely a man of either faith who was not arraigned against us".

Maulvi Liaqat Ali.

The leadership of Allahabad was assumed by Maulvi Liaqat Ali. He had been a teacher and was respected by all for his purity and simplicity of life. He was also a religious preacher—a *mulla*—and belonged to Chaubis Parganas. He was declared as the representative of the Delhi Emperor in a special ceremony held for the purpose with great pomp and show.

The Maulvi chose Khusro Bagh for his headquarters. He began to organize the civil administration from there. The anarchy, the confusion and the trouble which came in the wake of the rebellion were suppressed by him in a diplomatic manner. The happenings at Allahabad were regularly reported to Delhi until he remained in charge.

Maulvi Liaqat Ali tried to capture the fort, but before he could do so, General Neill arrived from Varanasi and took over the fort on June 11. From June 12 he began his operations. For full six days the nationalist troops offered a tough and dogged resistance in every quarter of the city. But the superior arms of the British and a ruthless slaughter by them won the day for the English. There was also a false rumour that the English were going to blow up the whole town and this led the people to leave the city *en masse*.

Khusro Bagh was now attacked by the British force. In spite of the brave defence put up by the Maulvi, it was clear that he could not hold for long. On the night of 17th June, he left for Kanpur with all his followers.

The message of 14th June, which the Maulvi sent to the Emperor at Delhi, unfolds the situation of those days: "Your Majesty will be pleased to know that the city and the district of Allahabad are flying the national flag. The people have thrown off the foreign yoke. Hindus and Mussalmans have joined hands as blood-brothers. Unfortunately we have not yet been able to take possession of the fort. We are short of proper types of cannon and catapults. A constant watch is kept over the Sikhs inside the fort. Virtually, they are prisoners and there is no way for them to escape. The district of Allahabad, with the exception of Jamnapar, has joined the forces of freedom. Chail, Atharban, Phaphamau, Soram, Mansetha, Dahiawan, Taraul, Baispur, Dhurawal, Kara, Koram, Tardih, Baundi Kotwa and Sikandara

*Page 193, volume II.

villages have so far sent their tribute in men and money and have pledged their allegiance on our side. By tomorrow morning, I am despatching a force of five hundred cavalry-men with five cannon and ten thousand coins of silver for the defence of Delhi. It may be .of interest to Your Majesty that fresh forces under Neill and Havelock have arrived at Allahabad and are taking positions in the fort. The entire population on the way from Allahabad to Fatehpur is with us and the enemy forces, if they dare march towards Kanpur, would neither get a grain of corn nor a drop of water. Our resistance will continue in spite of all formidable odds".*

To all intents and purposes, the mutiny was a people's uprising. Even to sell commodities to the British was considered to be a sin. Any action to the contrary was heavily punished by the community. A baker who had sent bread to the English had his hands and nose chopped off. This created great difficulties for the Europeans.

After the departure of Maulvi Saheb, the city fell to the British power and heavy penalties in the shape of unparalleled barbarity were inflicted upon the people of the 'guilty city'. Writes Sir John Kaye : "Day after day arrests were made of those suspected of complicity in the outbreak. Four Commissioners specially empowered for the purpose dealt out the sternest justice with utmost rapidity. In three hours and forty minutes 634 persons were tried, sentenced and hanged on the neem trees near the Kotwali".

The procedure adopted by General Neill was both cold-blooded and indiscriminate. When General Havelock reached Allahabad, he found corpses hanging from almost every tree and dead bodies littered throughout the town. Hundreds of women had thrown themselves in wells in order to escape the possibility of dishonour.

Even the children did not escape the fury of the British vengeance. Mr. Edmonstone wrote to his wife in England : "The little children inhabiting the lanes around Kotwali, where our officers and men are camping, were bold and impudent beyond description. They would appear from nowhere, in a row of procession, waiving their green flags with the ensign of golden sun, right at the face of the commanding officer. When they made themselves unbearable with their impudence, the commanding officer made short work of them by hanging fifty of them on the nearest neem trees. The little devils, while mounting the scaffold, were still uttering slogans for the freedom of their land".†

AGRA

Agra was the headquarters of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, which post was held by Mr. Colvin. Mr. Colvin had previously implored the sepoys to remain loyal and not to be agitated by the news from Meerut. He assured the sepoys in a speech delivered in Hindustani that the Government had full confidence in their loyalty. Thereafter things calmed down. But soon after, the rising at nearby Aligarh followed by those at Mainpuri and Etawah caused a panic at Agra and Mr. Colvin could not decide which of the conflicting counsels of his officers he should follow. On May 25, he issued a proclamation announcing that "soldiers engaged in the late disturbances who are desirous of going to their homes, and who give up their arms at the nearest Government civil or military post, and retire quietly, shall be permitted to do so unmolested . . . ."

This offer of unconditional pardon was repudiated by the Governor-General whereupon a new proclamation was issued in which it was made clear that "unconditional pardon cannot be extended to those regiments which

*The Trial of Bahadur Shah, Ex. paper no. 381.
†Native Narrative, page 164.

have killed or wounded their officers or other persons, or which have been concerned in the commission of cruel outrages".

There were two regiments of Indian sepoys at Agra. These were disarmed on May 31, 1857. Most of the disarmed men went home on leave.

On account of his weak health, the Lieutenant-Governor could not properly control the administration. Everybody was pulling in his own direction and the situation has been well described in these words: "The civil authorities disputed with the military, the militia with the regulars, and all among themselves: and, as if this were not enough, some of the civil officials made a very unprovoked attack on the Roman Catholic bishop and clergy".*

While Mr. Colvin was apprehending trouble at every moment the revolted regiments of Nasirabad and Nimach marched on Agra. On July 5, the "loyal" troops of the Ruler of Bharatpur were sent against them. These troops, however, refused to draw swords against their own countrymen. They said that though they would refrain from rising against the English, because such were the orders of their Ruler, they would not fight against their own brethren.

This instance proves that whatever may have been the attitude of the Rulers of Indian States themselves towards the English Government, their people and sepoys were not only not with the British, but were against them. However, Brigadier Polwhele marched on the regiments of Nasirabad and Nimach which were coming to attack Agra. A battle took place near Shahgunj, for the whole day. The British force could not, however, stand the attack of the revolutionaries and retreated. But they were not pursued by the rebels.

On July 6, the town of Agra also revolted, the police people being at the head of the revolutionaries. A procession was organised and the Kotwal and other police officers walked in the front line. It was proclaimed that the English rule was at an end and that authority had been transferred to the Emperor of Delhi.

Mr. Colvin, together with all the English at Agra, retired into the fort. This was an impregnable fort and the English seemed to be safe there at least for some time. The persons who took shelter in the fort were not only the Britishers, but residents of many other lands. At first Indian servants were not admitted into the fort, but they were called back within two or three days when it was found that the Europeans could not look after their daily needs. The fort was not besieged, but the inmates were not aware of this fact—they were under the mistaken impression that they were besieged. With the return of the servants, however, the truth was known.

Mr. Colvin was still not sure which side the Maharaja Scindhia would take. If he had felt that the Scindhia would be against him Mr. Colvin would possibly have surrendered the fort. However, it became clear soon from letters received from the Scindhia that he would help the British. Mr. Colvin, however, could not bear the great strain, and died on September 9, 1857, to the deep sorrow of the Government of India.

After the re-capture of Delhi, which followed the death of Mr. Colvin, General Greathed became free to bring relief to Agra. A battle took place with the insurgents, which included the Indore sepoys, resulting in British victory. Agra was safe from now on (October, 1858) and the city gradually returned to its normal life.

AZAMGARH

On the night of June 3, English officers of the 17th Native Infantry Regiment were

* Thornhill, page 262.

dining together at the Club. There was then a tremendous noise and a whisper went round amongst the diners that the sepoys had risen. Then followed the noise of drums and clarionets. The English began to run for their life. The sepoys, however, had no thoughts of revenge and so they took charge of men, women and children and ordered them to leave Azamgarh at once. The sepoys even provided carriages to them. It was an example of extraordinary magnanimity on the part of the sepoys who, after taking away the handcuffs of the English, put them in carriages and even gave a few sepoys as guard. The whole caravan, including the flag and other signs of British rule, then started for Varanasi. Writing about the praiseworthy conduct of the sepoys, Sir John Kaye writes : "It is stated on the authority of Lieutenant Constable of the 17th that the sepahis behaved with romantic courtesy. They formed a square round their officers and said they not only would not touch them, but would protect them".

The carriages going to Varanasi having got full, some of the Europeans took the way to Ghazipur. Amongst these was Mr. Astell, the Judge, whom the same sepoys of the 17th Native Infantry Regiment escorted to a distance of ten miles.

The sepoys also came in the possession of treasure amounting to seven lakhs in strange circumstances. It appears that the Accountant General had ordered the removal of the treasure from Gorakhpur to Azamgarh. With a sum of five lakhs, Lieutenant Palliser of Gorakhpur reached Azamgarh where another two lakhs were added to it. The Lieutenant apprehended the loss of the treasure even at Azamgarh so he marched towards Varanasi on the night of June 3, before the 17th Native Regiment had actually arisen. Three hours after Palliser had left Azamgarh, the 17th Regiment rose in revolt. But only two Europeans were killed—a lieutenant and a sergeant. They then went in pursuit of Lt. Palliser, overtook him on the road to Varanasi, took the treasure from him and returned to Azamgarh. In seizing the treasure from Palliser and his men, the sepoys behaved with courtesy and restraint. Lt. Palliser gratefully acknowledged, on reaching Varanasi, the kind treatment of the sepoys towards him and other officers while relieving them of the treasure.

In the uprising, the people also participated. They began by hoisting the flag of independence on the residential places which were previously in the occupation of the English. The next morning the sepoys drew up a great military procession through the town. Soon after, however, they marched to Faizabad, but a detachment of them is said to have gone to Varanasi too.

By the time these sepoys of the 17th Regiment reached Faizabad, the dark deeds of Neill at Varanasi had filled the people with horror and the nationalist troops with deep feelings of revenge. The 17th Regiment was now encamping at a few miles from Faizabad intending to march on the town in the morning of June 9. But on the previous night the sepoys of Faizabad too rose in arms. The European officers were, however, allowed to escape in four boats. At 10 p.m. the boats passed the camp of the 17th Regiment who intercepted them and killed almost all the occupants.

Thereafter this Regiment came to Kanpur where General Wheeler was being besieged by Nana Saheb. After they had capitulated and were being provided by Nana Saheb passage to Allahabad on the morning of the 27th June, it was this Regiment of Azamgarh which opened fire on the boats. Colonel Williams has borne this out in his report when he says that the Europeans embarked on the boats at about 9 a.m. and simultaneously, as if by magic, with the roar of cannon along the bank, were instantly taken up by the guns of the 17th Native Infantry of Azamgarh. From this circumstance it

has been held by several writers, some even British, that Nana Saheb was not to blame for it. "He had not that spirit of revenge which had gripped the heart of Subedar-Major Bandhoo Singh of the 17th Regiment, N. I., who was once a nobleman steeped into Indian tradition of war, and gave shelter to the unarmed, but who had lately, as a result of Colonel Neill's mass slaughter of innocent Indians, taken a vow of revenge". So writes Sri Kalka Singh, M. P., in an article entitled "In Memory of an 1857 Regiment", published in the Independence Day Supplement to the *Amrit Bazar Patrika,* dated August 15, 1957.

Sri Kalka Singh concludes the above article with the words: "The slaughter of the officers at Faizabad and Kanpur by the 17th Native Infantry of Azamgarh, threw a wave of horror in England and the terrified Englishmen thereafter adpoted a milder course for suppressing the revolt".

Towards February, 1858, Azamgarh was occupied by Kunwar Singh, after repulsing British troops twice. Soon after, a large European force under Lord Mark Kerr was sent from Allahabad to relieve Azamgarh. Kunwar Singh seeing no chance of standing against this formidable army retreated towards his home town of Jagdishpur. There were several engagements during this retreat and in one of them a prominent civilian of Azamgarh, Mr. Venables by name, was wounded and died subsequently. High praise was bestowed on him by the Governor-General who caused the following notification to be published: "It is with deep regret that His Lordship has to announce the subsequent death of Mr. Venables of Azamgarh from the wound received by him while gallantly assisting in the pursuit of the rebels under Kunwar Singh. Mr. Venables, although bound to the service of the State by no tie, save his courageous and patriotic spirit, had rendered the most valuable assistance to Government from the commencement of the mutiny, and had been greatly distinguished by his intrepidity and energy, tempered with a singularly calm and sound judgment. The Governor-General records with much sorrow his sincere respect for the memory of Mr. Venables".*

GORAKHPUR

The troops at Gorakhpur consisted of some detachments of the 17th Native Infantry and 12th Irregular Cavalry. Subsequently, one Gurkha regiment also arrived to help maintain order. The chief civil European officers were the Judge, Mr. Wynyard, the Magistrate, Mr. Paterson, and the Joint Magistrate, Mr. Bird.

Mohammad Hasan.

The Indian sepoys were disarmed on August 1, 1857, following the murder some days previously of Major Holmes by the men of his own regiment stationed at Segaulee and other disturbances which had earlier taken place in the district and as a result of which communications were interrupted. Conditions in the district deteriorated and on August 12, Mohammad Hasan, who had earlier saved Colonel Lennox and his family, occupied the tahsil of Captaingunj at the head of a nationalist force.

Later, the British with the exception of Mr. Bird evacuated Gorakhpur, entrusting the administration of the district to a committee of certain Rajas. Mohammad Hasan now advanced on the town entering it on August 20, in a public procession and was welcomed by the populace. Mr. Bird escaped into the forest and Mohammad Hasan announced a reward of Rs.5,000 for his head.

Mohammad Hasan who, before the advent of the East India Company into the district, was its Nazim or Governor, now assumed that title and began to administer the affairs with the aid of a council. He continued in his service as many of the employees of the

*Notification no. 103, dated May 7, 1858, republished in the N. W. P. Gazette, dated June 8, 1858, page 177.

former regime as agreed to serve him; in fact he had issued an order to them to continue to serve him which was obeyed by several. The landed proprietors who had submitted to his authority received dresses of honour, salutes of guns and were permitted to exercise civil and criminal authority. In short his administration was firm and secure for the time being.

Maharaja Jung Bahadur of Nepal was now advancing with a Gurkha army for the relief of Lucknow. His troops fought several actions with Mohammad Hasan who being ultimately defeated left the station by crossing the Ghaghra at Tanda with his principal officers.

FATEHPUR

At Fatehpur the revolt came from the general population under Munshi Hikmat Ullah, Deputy Collector. There were no troops at the station except a small detachment of 50 men of the 6th Native Infantry which had its headquarters at Allahabad. These men were there to guard the treasury. The British officers at the station included Mr. J. W. Sherer, the Collector, Mr. R. T. Tucker, the Judge (brother of Commissioner Tucker of Varanasi), an opium agent, a salt agent, a doctor and three or four persons connected with the Railway then under construction.

On June 8, 1857, there was nervousness amongst the Europeans on account of the disquieting rumours about Allahabad and Kanpur. By night-fall the police deserted their posts. Next morning the people of the town attacked the treasury, but were repulsed by the guard. Some of the men proceeded to the jail and thereafter the Mission premises and the dak bungalow were plundered and burnt. The people were joined by men from the surrounding villages and by some escaped prisoners from Allahabad. The civil lines were then attacked and several houses plundered, but no English life was taken.

Munshi Hikmat Ullah visited the Collector in the afternoon. Thereafter, in the darkness of the night the Collector and other European officers, with the exception of Mr. Tucker, fled to Banda, which was still quiet, reaching there the next day.

Mr. Tucker had, from the very beginning, refused to abandon his post, as he considered it his duty to remain at Fatehpur to the last. On the 9th he had shot down single-handed some of the rebel men, but the next day he met his own death. The Commissioner of Allahabad in his report to Government, submitted after the restoration of authority, paid a tribute to him in these words: "It is impossible not to admire, how far it may be regretted, the heroic devotion of Mr. Tucker; nor is it much a matter of wonder that his conduct and his personal powers actually succeeded in preserving, for a few hours longer, some show of order. Mr. Tucker, by his earnest and open profession of religion, and by his unbounded pecuniary liberality, had commanded the respect, if not the affection, of a large number of the inhabitants of the city, and when the excited mob returned in triumphant procession from his slaughter, two Hindus of the town stood out before them and reviled them as the murderers of a just and holy man; it is scarcely necessary to add that they immediately shared his fate".

In July, 1857, the British troops, under Major Renaud followed by those under Havelock, marching from Allahabad to the relief of Kanpur, took severe vengeance on the town and the neighbouring villages. Innocent people were indiscriminately slaughtered. Munshi Hikmat Ullah was hung and villages were burnt. The town was also given to plunder.

ETAWAH

Mr. Allen O. Hume, who later founded the Indian National Congress, was the District Magistrate at Etawah. He formed a corps to guard the roads round the town. On May 19, 1857, there was an engagement

between this corps and some sepoys coming from Meerut. The sepoys were captured and disarmed. All of a sudden, however, they seized their arms and killed their captors. The sepoys then entered a Hindu temple nearby, hiding themselves in it. Mr. Hume with his Assistant Magistrate, Mr. Daniell, and some Indian soldiers proceeded towards the temple. On approaching it Mr. Hume found that the town-people were giving food to these sepoys and singing their praise. Notwithstanding this situation Mr. Daniell rushed towards the temple, only to be shot down by the sepoys inside it.

Thereafter, on the news of the execution of a spy at Aligarh reaching Etawah on May 23, all the Indian troops rose at night with sword in one hand and lighted torch in the other. The sepoys then took the English camp, looted the treasury and broke the prison. They, however, gave option to the English officers to leave the place instantly failing which they were threatened with destruction. The officers took advantage of this offer and hid themselves, with their wives and children, wherever they found a place. Mr. Hume himself left Etawah.

Etawah was then proclaimed as an independent town and all the sepoys proceeded to join the army at Delhi. These sepoys were a detachment of the 9th Native Infantry which was stationed at Aligarh.

ALIGARH

The mutiny started at Aligarh on the evening of May 20, 1857, as a result of the execution a short time earlier of a spy who had been arrested at Boland (near Aligarh) for spying amongst the sepoys. He was then sent to Aligarh where he was sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was carried out before the whole regiment of the 9th Native Infantry stationed at Aligarh. The men of this regiment, who had planned to rise at a later date, could not now restrain themselves and rose in arms the same evening. The 9th Regiment was regarded by the English officers as the "most loyal" regiment. But the resentment against the British was so great that this regiment also could not maintain its loyalty. In their magnanimity the sepoys allowed the officers to leave Aligarh. The officers, with their wives and children, and several other Europeans, including Lady Outram, left Aligarh quietly by midnight.

ROHILKHAND : BAREILLY, SHAHJAHANPUR, MORADABAD, BUDAUN AND BIJNOR

The Rohilkhand of those days comprised the districts of Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Moradabad, Budaun and Bijnor, with a Commissioner in charge with his headquarters at Bareilly. Large assortments of Indian troops at various stations had been posted, but the concentration was at Bareilly which was the main town and where the troops consisted of the 8th Irregular Cavalry, the 18th Infantry Regiment, the 68th Infantry Regiment and a battery of Indian artillery, all manned by Indian sepoys.

The sepoys, in spite of the provocations, stuck to the original date—31st May—for the start of the uprising. Thus, the mutiny in these districts started on the appointed day, and within the course of the day, British authority at all these places came to an end. The majority of the English officers were allowed to escape ; only in a few cases were they captured and put to death.

Bareilly

It was on May 14 that news of the Meerut rising reached Bareilly. The Englishmen there sent their families to Naini Tal as a precautionary measure although they had much faith in the loyalty of the sepoys. They had still greater confidence in the Indian cavalry. In order, however, to avoid risks the English officers ordered a parade on May 15, and informed the sepoys that the objectionable cartridges will no longer be given to them and

that they should have no fear on that score. The sepoys said nothing though this re-assurance had apparently little effect on them. The parade passed off peacefully as the sepoys had decided to wait for the appointed day. Their patience was praiseworthy, because they had also received a message from the Commander of the Indian Army at Delhi asking them to come to Delhi immediately.

There were rumours that the rising would take place on the 29th or the 30th May, but both these days passed off without any untoward incident. On the 31st May as the clock struck 10, a gun was fired in the sepoy lines and with it the soldiers rose to a man. In the early morning that day the residence of a Captain had been set on fire, but not much significance was attached to it by the officers. It was a Sunday and the morning parade had also passed off smoothly. The Europeans had also offered their prayers in the church without finding any sign of trouble anywhere.

The revolt began by the 68th Infantry Regiment attacking the English officers near their lines. Small detachments went to the various bungalows. Some others began to kill Englishmen and some began to put the bungalows on fire, as previously arranged. The terror-stricken Englishmen ran towards the Cavalry lines. On arrival there, they ordered the Cavalry Regiment to march on the mutineers. But the cavalry sided with the latter. The English lost all chance of saving their lives and began to fly towards Naini Tal. Only 32 officers, however, could reach that place safely. The rest were killed either at Bareilly or on the way. By the afternoon the British rule at Bareilly had come to an end.

Bakht Khan, the Subedar of the sepoy artillery, whose name has already been mentioned, was made the Commander of the troops. He exhorted the sepoys to do their duty in sustaining the newly-established rule. Thereafter, he went through the town followed by the new officers seated in the carriages previously used by European officers. But soon after, Bakht Khan proceeded to Delhi at the head of his troops and there became the Commander-in-Chief of the nationalist forces under the Emperor.

Khan Bahadur Khan.

Khan Bahadur Khan, a prominent figure of Rohilkhand, thereupon organized a new force which in course of time swelled to 30,000 men. He established his headquarters at Bareilly, proclaiming himself the ruler of Rohilkhand in the capacity of Subedar (Viceroy) of the Delhi Emperor. His rulership was acclaimed by the whole populace.

Khan Bahadur Khan was a person of high antecedents and enjoyed great fame in Rohilkhand. He was a grandson of Hafiz Rahmat and in that capacity was in receipt of a political pension (Rs.1,200 per annum) from the British Government. The circumstances of this grant are given in the following narrative : "Hafiz Rahmat was the ruler of the Bareilly district during the Rohilla ascendancy in the Kuttair Provinces ; a fight ensued between him and the Nawab Wuzeer Shooja-od-dawla (of Avadh) for some breach of promise on the part of the former in 1774 A. D., in which the former was killed, which resulted in the usurpation of his fief and its annexation to the domains of the conqueror who made some provision for the support of the survivors of the vanquished, which descended to them down to the cession of half of the Wuzeer's territory to the British Government in 1801, when, agreeably to a treaty concluded between the two powers, the continuance of these stipends was stipulated for".*

Khan Bahadur Khan was a favourite of the British Government too. He was a retired Judicial officer having served Government

*Proceedings of the Government of N. W. P. Political Department, for April, 1864.

in this capacity, and was in receipt of a service pension also, in addition to the political pension.

Khan Bahadur Khan organised a proper Government for the province and assessed land revenue in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. He also formed a militia of the citizens. The Indian officers who were holding office under the East India Company were confirmed in their posts. In other words, by dint of his administrative ability he continued the administration of every department and there was no interruption in work on the change of Government.

Khan Bahadur Khan used to send to the Emperor an account of the happenings in Rohilkhand written by himself. He also issued a proclamation which he posted throughout Rohilkhand. In it he appealed to all Hindus and Muslims to work unitedly and not to fall into the deception of the English people. He warned them against the British who tried to incite the Hindus against the Muslims and the Muslims against the Hindus. It referred to the absorption of 'native' territories into the Company's dominion and cited the example of Nagpur and Lucknow. It was added that killing of cows would be stopped. The proclamation concluded with the warning that if anyone opposed the new rule he would be struck and would be guilty of the sin of suicide.

Though old in years and physically feeble, Khan Bahadur Khan ruled over Rohilkhand from where British authority had completely disappeared. Having proclaimed himself the Viceroy (Subedar) of the Emperor he sent a nazar and rich presents to Delhi and obtained the necessary farman of his office. He appointed a committee of eight persons, Hindus and Muslims, to carry on the administration. Amongst these was Sobha Ram who held the office of Dewan. The British made an endeavour towards the end of 1857 to raise a Hindu revolt against Khan Bahadur Khan and although a sum of Rs.50,000 was allotted for the purpose, the efforts were unsuccessful.

Having reduced Lucknow, the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, now turned his attention to Rohilkhand. The province was entered into by his troops from many sides and in May, 1858, Sir Colin won the battle of Bareilly after a desperate fight. Nana Saheb is also said to have been present in this battle. The *ghazis* of Khan Bahadur's Rohilla Cavalry made a furious charge on the British troops who mowed them down by their artillery fire. But the *ghazis* were undaunted and died in the cause of religion without seeking quarter. Thereafter, the English troops proceeded the next day towards the city of Bareilly, but were encountered in the way by a party of Khan Bahadur's troops which held a bridge over a small river flowing by Bareilly. These were easily repulsed and the British force occupied Bareilly, Khan Bahadur Khan having left for Pilibhit.

After some further engagements later on, Khan Bahadur Khan, with other nationalist leaders—Rana Beni Madhav Singh, Begam Hazrat Mahal, Nana Saheb, Bala Saheb, Jwala Prasad, Mammu Khan, Amar Singh, Menhdi Hasan and others who had been driven out of their home districts—found his way to Nepal.

Shahjahanpur

Shahjahanpur is about 47 miles from Bareilly. The 28th Infantry had its headquarters there. Although the news of the Meerut rising reached Shahjahanpur on May 15, the sepoys kept their plans secret until May 31. On that date, which was a Sunday, the English were in church. The sepoys rose at that time and proceeded towards the church. The Chaplain came out to see what was happening and then his head was cut off. The City Magistrate,

Mr. Rickets, fell while running. Another batch of sepoys had made their way to the Cantonment and started killing and burning there. The Assistant Magistrate was killed in the verandah while trying to escape. Dr. Bowling was shot down while addressing the sepoys and in the course of which he used the word "seditious" for the sepoys. The mutineers then went away towards Mohamdi. By the evening of May 31, Shahjahanpur also came into the hands of the rebels.

Moradabad

Moradabad is about 48 miles north-west of Bareilly. The 29th Infantry Regiment and half a battalion of Native Artillery were stationed there.

The sepoys of Moradabad also had received information of the happenings at Meerut, but they kept up appearances till May 31. On that day, the sepoys began to collect on the parade ground. There they declared that the rule of the Company had come to an end. They also said that the British should depart from Moradabad within two hours failing which they would be killed. The police of Moradabad also announced that they would not now obey the orders of the officers. The citizens of Moradabad too made a similar announcement. Thereupon, the Judge, the Magistrate, the Civil Surgeon and others together with their families left Moradabad without the least protest. Those of the Englishmen who were found in the town after the expiry of two hours were killed. It is said that the Commissioner. Mr. Power, and certain other Englishmen embraced Islam to save their lives.

Here also by the afternoon the rebels were in full possession of the town over which the green flag began to fly.

Budaun

Budaun is situated between Bareilly and Shahjahanpur. In Budaun the big zamindars and their tenants were greatly disaffected with the Company's rule because of heavy taxes and oppressive measures. The town people of Budaun first rose in revolt. This was on June 1, 1857, in the evening. Thereafter, the sepoys at the treasury, the police and the leading citizens announced by beat of drum that the English rule had come to an end. Being part of Rohilkhand this district too came into the jurisdiction of Khan Bahadur Khan.

The sepoys took the treasure and marched towards Delhi. English officers, including the Collector, began to run about in the forests at night. Some of them were killed, some died for want of food while some lived under the protection of kindly Indians.

Bijnor—Sir Syed Ahmad.

At Bijnor, Munshi (later Sir) Syed Ahmad Khan, who subsequently founded the Aligarh College (afterwards turned into University), played an important part in support of British authority. He was the Sadar Amin (Civil Judge) at Bijnor when, about the end of May, 1857, the District Jail was attacked by the people. The assailants were, however, quickly dispersed. Afterwards, when the mutinous sepoys of Roorkee came to the town, this officer persuaded them to leave the Europeans alone. After the sepoys had left the station, Nawab Mahmud Khan surrounded the house in which the English were sheltered. Again Syed Ahmad came to their succour and made a settlement with the Nawab that the Europeans should be allowed to go unmolested to Meerut. The district of Bijnor, however, remained in the hands of the Nawab till the English returned to claim it. Subsequently, the Nawab himself was ousted by other competitors, and with the approval of the British authorities, Syed Ahmad was commissioned to run the administration in collaboration with some influential people. Certain incidents, however, brought the Nawab again in power till the eventual restoration of British rule.

B. OTHER PLACES IN AVADH

FAIZABAD

Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah.

The rising at Faizabad came into form on the arrest of Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah.

The name of Maulvi Saheb finds a conspicuous place in the history of 1857. On his property having been confiscated by the British Government some time before 1857, he became a preacher and toured all over India secretly preaching revolt against the alien rule. Wherever he went, he aroused deep respect for himself. He was in touch with the leaders of the time. The royal family of Avadh also welcomed him at Lucknow. He wrote pamphlets advocating the complete annihilation of foreign rule. Eventually, the Government arrested him and put him on trial. On conviction he was sentenced to death. He was awaiting execution in jail when the revolt broke out and the sepoys went to the prison and released him.

Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah was a broad-minded person. He had no personal enmity with the English people. As soon as he was set free by the sepoys, he wrote a letter to Colonel Lennox (who was then in his custody) thanking him for the permission which the latter had given him to use a *hukka* while he was in prison.

He took steps to prevent loot and disorder. Public buildings and the arsenal were guarded. He advised the English officers to abandon Faizabad immediately. He persuaded the men of the 15th Regiment who had subsequently resolved to kill the English, to honour the pledge that had been given to them earlier. Boats were provided for them and they were also given some money for out-of-way expenses. They were allowed to take along whatever belongings they could This was followed by a proclamation on June 9 that the Company's rule had ended and that Nawab Wajid Ali Shah had come back to power.

While proceeding to the boats, the Englishmen were attacked by the sepoys, resulting in the death of several officers, including the Commissioner. Only one boat escaped and safely reached the English Camp with the help of boatmen.

Colonel Lennox was one of those who escaped unhurt from Faizabad. Of the kind treatment that he received at the hands of his captors on the way he has left the following record : "While we were running, the men of Nazim Hossein Khan caught us. One of them drew out his revolver, gnashed his teeth and said that his hands were throbbing to despatch the Feringhis away in an instant, but that he could not do it ! We were next taken up to the Nazim. He was sitting in the darbar leaning on a cushion. He told us to drink a little *sherbet* and rest, and not to be frightened. When the question arose as to what quarters should be given to us, an angry servant suggested the horse-stables nearby. The Nazim rebuked him for this, but immediately another broke forth, 'Why all this trouble ? I will just kill these Feringhi dogs' ! The Nazim thundered against them all and promised us our lives. We hid near the zenana through fear of the mutineers. We got good clothing and rest".

From Faizabad, Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah proceeded to Lucknow, the seat of the revolution in Avadh. He defeated the English force in the battle of Chinhat near Lucknow and was thereafter amongst the prominent leaders at Lucknow under Begam Hazrat Mahal. Though with no military training, he had the natural instincts of a born leader. He never missed a weak point in the enemy line and always strove to strike at it. After the fall of Lucknow, he was still active and fought several actions, particularly in the towns of Rohilkhand. He had succeeded in occupying Shahjahanpur. The British garrison at that station had taken shelter in

an entrenchment which held on for eight days before Brigadier Jones came to its succour. The Maulvi Saheb did not, however, retire without a fight. He had in the meantime been re-inforced by Shahzada Firoz Shah and Begam Hazrat Mahal. But Jones repulsed their attack and Shahjahanpur was saved.

From Shahjahanpur, the Maulvi Saheb now proceeded to Mohamdi and later on June 5 he reached Powain, a small fort some miles from Shahjahanpur. The Raja of Powain would not, however, receive him. He closed the gate of his fort against the incomer. The Maulvi charged the gate with his elephant, but before a break-through could be made he received a fatal shot from inside the garrison and fell dead on the *howdah*. His dead body was then captured by the Raja who severed his head and sent it to the Magistrate of Shahjahanpur. There it was exposed at the Kotwali. The Raja received the sum of Rs.50,000 which the Government had set on this hero's head.

Thus perished a great patriot, a great leader and a great man. Even Englishmen have spoken of him as "a man of great abilities, of undaunted courage, of stern determination, and by far the best soldier amongst the rebels."*

The highest tribute has been paid to him by Malleson who says : "If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongfully destroyed, of his native country, then most certainly the Maulvi was a true patriot. He had not stained his sword by assassination, he had connived at no murders ; he had fought manfully, honourably, and stubbornly in the field against the strangers who had seized his country, and his memory is entitled to the respect of the brave and the true-hearted of all nations".†

SITAPUR

Sitapur was the headquarters of the Commissioner of Sitapur and other high officials. The 41st Infantry and the 9th and the 10th Irregular Infantries were stationed there.

Some fires were caused to the bungalows occupied by the Europeans on May 27, but they did not know that these were the premonitory symptoms of the rising. No special attention was, therefore, given to them, particularly as the sepoys themselves helped in putting down the flames.

On June 2, the sepoys complained that the flour bags being given to them contained powder of bones, and on that ground refused to take them. They also insisted that the bags should be thrown instantly into the river. The officers accepted the protest and the bags were so disposed of.

In the afternoon of the same day, the sepoys rushed into the gardens of their English officers and began to pluck and eat the fruits. Protests from the officers were of no avail.

On June 3, a batch of sepoys captured the treasury and the rest went and attacked the bungalow of the Commissioner. Before that they had killed Colonel Birch and Lieutenant Graves.

The 9th Irregulars also killed their officers.

The Commissioner, his wife and his son were killed while trying to cross the river. In all about 24 English lives were lost. Some of the Englishmen sought protection with some zamindars and lived secretly in their houses for some ten months. After the recapture of Lucknow by the British they were taken there safely.

All the sepoys of Sitapur then proceeded to Farrukhabad.

C. BIHAR

Amar Singh

The rebellion in Bihar mainly centred round Kunwar Singh, an account of whom has been given in Chapter 35. His younger brother,

*Sir Thomas Seaton quoted by Dr. Sen, page 356.
†Dr. Sen, page 356.

Amar Singh, also made his name as a great leader and fighter. While Kunwar Singh was away fighting in the North-Western Provinces and Avadh, Amar Singh continued the struggle in Bihar. He took up the leadership of the people of Shahabad and instilled fresh vigour in the masses. He carried on a long and desultory war and was successful in occupying Sasram and Rohtas. The British got very anxious about the conditions in Bihar, one of the reasons being that this province was a grower of opium and so Government revenue was seriously affected as opium cultivation received a serious set-back.

On Kunwar Singh's death on April 24, 1858, the command of his troops devolved on Amar Singh. Amar Singh ran a parallel Government in the district of Shahabad. His tenants were deeply faithful to him. He appointed his own magistrates and judges. And just as the British Government had placed a price on his head, so he too set a price on the heads of high English officials. Justice was properly administered and the lands of revenue defaulters were sold to realize the arrears.

But there were heavy odds against Amar Singh for large British armies were detailed to defeat him. He fought on, pursued by British generals, until October, 1859, when he took shelter in the Terai jungles along with the rest of the nationalist leaders.

Besides Shahabad, Gaya was another place where the tide of the rebellion had its sway. A significant feature here was the part played by villagers in organising some sort of village unions to raise the flag of independence. The people who took part in the struggle included pensioners of Government and people possessing extensive landed properties. Hyder Ali Khan and Judhar Singh were the prominent leaders in this district. The followers of the former fought fiercely crying 'Hyder Ali Raja', and the latter set up his rule making grants of land to his men.

In Shahabad division too there was a formidable upsurge under two brothers Nilambar and Pitambar whose father's estate of Palamau had been confiscated by the East India Company. By the end of 1858, the whole of the Palamau region had passed into the possession of the nationalist leaders. All classes of people, villagers, village-headmen, military pensioners and even religious mendicants took part in the struggle. It is noteworthy that not in a single instance was the Government's offer of reward for the apprehension of rebels responded to.

The rebellion in Sambalpur was particularly intense. Sambalpur was annexed by the British Government in 1826, the claims of Surendra Sai to the principality having been disregarded. Surendra, with the members of the family, raised the banner of revolt and was joined by a number of land-holders who were disaffected by the revenue measures of the Government. From 1857 to 1862, he remained in a state of war, ran a parallel government of his own and kept the whole region in a state of excitement. The rebellion here was wholly a struggle of the people of the local tribes. The nationalist forces made a cordon of outposts at distances of some four miles each which obstructed the attacks of the British who were often ambushed in dense jungles. The English had to despatch troops from several quarters to suppress the revolt in Sambalpur.

Next to Kunwar Singh, the Kols of Singhbhum played a significant part in the upsurge. Arjun Singh, the Raja of Porahat, led the Kols furiously against the English. Prior to the revolt he had his arrow circulated amongst large numbers of disaffected Kols, symbolizing his preparedness for war. By January, 1858, the whole of Singhbhum was at war with the British. Down to the end of 1858, the Kols fought desperately. The

British were obliged to offer terms of amnesty to Arjun Singh who later surrendered in the following February.

The condition of Bihar was described in a letter of an opium planter, Solano by name, addressed to the Lieutenant Governor. In it he said that nothing was left to the Europeans but a heap of ruins and referred to the wide-spread belief that Kunwar Singh would not permit Shahabad to be in peace so long as life was in him. In his reply the Lieutenant Governor made mention of the general disaffection which prevailed in Bihar and occasioned, partly by the villagers and the police who were unwilling to lay their hands on the mutinous sepoys lurking in the district, and partly by the influence of Kunwar Singh and by a general belief that he was soon to return victorious to his estate. It is on record that the people of Shahabad wrote a letter to Kunwar Singh urging him and the other leaders not to accept any proposals for peace with Government, but to continue the struggle because peace would mean death. A promise was added that supplies would be reached to them by boats.

D. THE PUNJAB

It was the Punjab which saved England's Indian empire. "Had the Punjab gone, we must have been ruined. Long before re-inforcements could have reached the upper provinces, the bones of all Englishmen would have been bleaching in the sun. England would never have recovered from the calamity and retrieved her power in the East"—*Life of Lord Lawrence*, volume II, page 335.

The reasons why the Sikhs did not only keep aloof from the revolt but even wholeheartedly helped the English have been variously analysed. In the first place, there was for various reasons great discord between Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs in the Punjab. The other circumstance was that the Sikhs had been brought under the sway of the English only about eight years previously when in 1849 the Punjab was annexed. The Sikhs had not yet been disillusioned of the rule of the East India Company

The English also took advantage of an ancient prophecy believed by the Sikhs, namely that the Khalsa would one day march upon Delhi (the spot where an earlier Moghal Emperor had killed their Guru) and raze it to the ground. To this prophecy the English officers added a rider to the effect that the assault would succeed only when the Khalsa and the Company joined hands. This modified prophecy did the trick, for the Sikhs believed in it. A false proclamation was also posted at places in the Punjab that the first order of Bahadur Shah at Delhi was the massacre of all the Sikhs. This aroused further feelings of hatred in them towards Delhi.

The nationalist leaders on their part had greatly tried to get the Sikhs on their side. But for the reasons already stated the English succeeded in winning them over completely on their side. This turned the scales in favour of the Company. In a letter of October 21, 1857, Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, had written : "Had the Sikhs joined against us nothing, humanly speaking, could have saved us".

In the Punjab were stationed some 36,000 non-Sikh sepoys, belonging to the districts east of the Punjab, and some 24,000 Europeans and Punjabis. These 'eastern' sepoys were known as *Purbias* and between them and the Sikhs bitter feelings had been coming on, one of the reasons being that it was mainly the *Purbia* sepoys who had conquered the Punjab for the English. On the outbreak at Meerut and Delhi, the British

officers in the Punjab deliberately put across the term *Purbia* because it "revived the contempt and hatred with which the class had ever been regarded; it widened the breach between the Punjabee and the Hindustanee and rendered any coalition the more difficult".*

After the execution in early April of Mangal Pandey, there occurred mysterious fires at Ambala and other Cantonments in the country. Ambala was the chief headquarters of the Company's Army and the English Commander-in-Chief stayed there. Houses of English military officers were every now and then set on fire. There were many fires, but how they were started remained a mystery. Monetary rewards were announced by the Commander-in-Chief but no one could trace those who took part in setting the fires. General Anson, the Commander-in-Chief, was in great despair and wrote to the Governor-General: "It is really strange that the incendiaries should never be detected. Every one is alert here, but still there is no clue to trace the offenders". Towards the close of April, 1857, he again wrote to the Governor-General: "We have not been able to detect any of the incendiaries at Ambala. This appears to me extraordinary; but it shows how close are the combinations among the miscreants who have recourse to this mode of revenging what they conceive to be their wrongs, and how great is the dread of retaliation to any one who would dare to become an informer".

The plan fixed was that on May 31, 1857, the whole of the country should burst out in universal conflagration so that the English should have no room to escape

When the news of the uprising at Meerut and Delhi reached Lahore on May 12, there were hurried consultations between Robert Montgomery, the Judicial Commissioner at Lahore, and the principal civil and military officers. Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner, was not there, being on his way to Murree. These officers tried to find out what was the real state of affairs in the minds of the spoys in Lahore and the camp at Mian Mir nearby. As a result of secret inquiry they gathered the information that the sepoys were steeped in revolt up to the neck—they were only awaiting the signal for rising in open revolt.

It was thereupon decided to disarm the sepoys immediately. On May 13, a general parade was called at Mian Mir, but the purpose of disarming the men was kept secret. While the sepoys were doing normal movements at the parade, they were suddenly surrounded by English cavalry and artillery. The Indian regiments got confused and when ordered peremptorily to give up arms they did so and without a word walked back to their lines. Their number was 2,500 and though filled with rage they did nothing because of the artillery guns about them. Later, many of these men were murdered in pitiable circumstances under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, Mr. Cooper. An account of this appears in Chapter 47, entitled AND THAT WELL AT AJNALA.

Simultaneously with the disarming of the sepoys at Mian Mir, the English artillery had put a battalion of English troops into the fort of Lahore and disarmed the sepoys there too. It is to be noted that the Lahore fort was garrisoned entirely by Indian sepoys—this was so because the camp at Mian Mir in which English troops were stationed was quite near Lahore. After disarming the sepoys, the British troops turned them out of the fort and occupied it.

When the news spread that the authorities had disarmed the Mian Mir sepoys and taken

*J. Cave-Browne's *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857* pp. xv-xvi of the preface.

the Lahore fort, British prestige gained ground in the Punjab. Had there been any delay in disarming the battalions at Mian Mir, there would have been, within a fortnight, a general uprising of the Indian regiments at Peshawar, Amritsar, Pilhur and Jallundar because at these places the Indian sepoys were marking time, waiting for the sepoys of Mian Mir to attack the Lahore fort and thus give a signal for mass uprisings.

The next place to be occupied by the English was the fort of Govindgarh near Amritsar. The English attached great importance to Amritsar in view of its being a holy place for the Sikhs and so were anxious to prevent any untoward things happening there. Rumours had gone round that the disarmed sepoys of Mian Mir were going to take possession of Govindgarh fort. The English, perceiving the danger, immediately occupied it with the help of Jats and Sikhs. This was on or about May 13. In this way the English found themselves in safety both at Lahore and Amritsar.

At Ferozpur, the English had an undefended arsenal. There were two regiments of Indian sepoys here, but the authorities did not suspect their fidelity. However, the two regiments were separated from each other. One day the English officers had the sepoys marched through the bazars. The shopkeepers and customers now spurned the sepoys to action. In the result a war-cry was raised. But before anything further could be done the English blew up the arsenal thinking that it was difficult to save it. Thereafter the people of the town of Ferozpur also rose and burnt bungalows, tents, hotels and churches. Englishmen were being hunted, but they had previously received telegrams of warning from Meerut and had hid themselves. The sepoys on their part marched off towards Delhi. Later the English army came and took possession of the town. Indiscriminate massacre and inhuman cruelties were then committed on the town people.

The sepoys at Jallundar had also made secret preparations and had drawn up a plan. The sepoys waited patiently till the arrival of the hour agreed upon. It was on June 7 that the signal for the rising was made. This signal was the setting on fire of the bungalow of the Colonel of the Queen's Regiment. Thereupon the sepoys rose in revolt at midnight. The rising was so sudden that, even though there were European soldiers and artillery-men, all lost their nerve. The English—men, women and children—began to run to places of safety. The sepoys, however, did not kill their officers because of the confidence which the latter had till the last reposed in the sepoys. In their magnanimity, the sepoys returned this good turn by leaving the British officers alone. The higher authorities had been thinking of disarming the men, but their officers were against this.

The sepoys then marched to Pilhur where there was another Indian contingent. The Pilhur sepoys received them, and under the leadership of Indian Jamadars and Subedars the combined force marched to Delhi *via* Ludhiana. Near Ludhiana a British force met them and there was a vigorous fight during the night. Eventually, the British (aided by the Sikhs) lost the field and fled. The sepoys then entered the town of Ludhiana about mid-day. Ludhiana had become a powerful centre of secret activities against the British and the people of the town were anxious to break away from foreign yoke. The whole town rose. Houses of Englishmen, English newspaper presses, and Government stores were burnt. The prison was broken Whatever belonged to the Government and whatever was English was burnt down. The remaining property was razed to the ground.

Ludhiana was the key to the Punjab and if the sepoys could have held the fort there instead of marching to Delhi, it would have meant a great shock to British power. The sepoys knew this, but were without a leader and without ammunition. They had,

therefore, no alternative but to march towards Delhi where the nerve-centre of Indian independence had been created. The British soldiers at Ludhiana were so completely demoralised by all that had happened that though the sepoys used to march in procession by day, the English troops made no pursuit.

A contingent of Indian sepoys was stationed at Peshawar also. It consisted of 3,000 sepoys and 500 sawars. These men had been considerably agitated on hearing the news of the disarming of their colleagues at Mian Mir. The Commander and other officers, however, had faith in their men and they felt aggrieved at the contemplated disarming of this regiment also. Eventually, it was decided to disarm them on May 22. The sepoys knew nothing about this till they gathered on the parade and were ordered to pile their arms. Seeing no alternative they obeyed. It is important to record that some of the English officers were unable to look calmly at this—they threw their own swords on the pile of arms as a protest against what they considered unmerited humiliation of their corps.*

The Colonel's Suicide.

There was stationed at Hoti Mardan the 55th Regiment of Native Infantry. The Government of the Punjab believed that this regiment would also mutiny, but Colonel Spottiswoode, the chief officer in command, insisted that his sepoys would never rise against their officers. The Colonel was overruled and it was decided to disarm his regiment. On the night of May 24, 1857, the Indian officers went to him to hear what he had to say. This regiment had committed no outward act of mutiny—indeed the demeanour of the men towards their officers had been perfectly respectful. Colonel Spottiswoode was moved by what his Indian officers told him and, as he himself had nothing to urge in support of the disarming which had been decided upon against his advice, his heart was broken for he had a genuine love for his men. So when they left, the melancholy officer, feeling that he had nothing to live for when his faithful men were being suspected and disarmed, retired to his room and ended his life with his own hand.

When the sepoys heard of the Colonel's suicide they rose and attacked the treasury and then marched off towards Delhi. The English army was in hot pursuit and these sepoys had no chance of escaping because the whole of the Punjab was against them. They had the possible alternative of surrendering, but decided to die fighting. The pursuit was being done by Colonel Nicholson who was often on horse-back for 24 hours without disarming. More than a hundred died fighting. Some others tried to escape into Kashmir, but Maharaja Gulab Singh, the ruler, prohibited them from entering his country. He also gave orders that any of these sepoys found in his territory should be instantly killed. Some 120 were captured, of whom a terrible example was to be made. Some were hanged, some others blown from the mouth of guns. It is to be noted that these sepoys had not committed a single act of atrocity on the British and the penalty which was imposed on them was not only unwarranted, but was also inhuman.

It is also on record that before being put to death these brave soldiers were cruelly tortured. English historians probably were genuinely ashamed of this inhuman slaughter and for that reason have omitted to make mention of this matter in their books. The famous historian Kaye has, however, made a sort of suppressed hint on the subject in the following words : "Though I have plenty of letters with me describing the terrible and cruel tortures committed by our officers, I do not write a word about it, so that this subject should be no longer before the world".

*Holmes, pp. 525-26.

At some other places also, similar disarmings were done—some of these concluded quietly; in others there was resistance and mutiny.

Mention may now be made of some incidents which took place at Sialkot following the mutiny there on July 9, 1857. When the mutiny broke out here, the English officers ran to take shelter in the old fort. Some were killed, but the women and children were not touched* and many of the officers owed their lives to their personal servants and to sepoys. Some sepoys gave shelter to a number of Europeans in the regimental quarter-guard and later in the cover of the night escorted them to the fort with their families. Money was also supplied to them. In one case they took great risk by taking the wife of the European quarter-master sergeant to her bungalow to fetch some cash. It happened thus: "The lady was seen weeping by the Havildar in-charge and on enquiry replied that though the sepoys had saved her life she was penniless as everything had been left behind in the bungalow. She was then taken, under a guard with fixed bayonets, to her house in the Cantonment where she collected her cash and other valuables."†

The mutineers soon left Sialkot. They were later pursued by Nicholson and there was a sharp fight. Eventually the men fell into his hands and were destroyed in detail in a river island in which they had taken shelter.

Thus, within a short time, all the regiments of *Purbias* in the Punjab were eliminated by fair means or foul. The Chief Commissioner, Sir John Lawrence, was not happy at the policy of declaring war on all sepoys, whether loyal or disloyal, but he saw no alternative course. He expressed his feelings thus: "The misfortune of the present state of affairs is this,—each step we take for our own security is a blow against the regular sepoy. He feels this, and on his side takes a further step, and so we go on, until we disband or destroy them, or they mutiny and kill their officers".‡

The Punjab Government was now able to devote all its energies to the task of reinforcing the Commander-in-Chief in re-capturing Delhi. India had to be saved and Lawrence did not hesitate to strain the resources of the Punjab to their utmost limit. And here we might record that the English army committed cruel barbarities on their way to Delhi. In village after village people were caught and put immediately before a court-martial. Prior to being hanged these unfortunate people were cruelly treated. The hair on their heads were pulled out and their bodies pierced by bayonets while the scaffolds were being erected. Cow's flesh was forced in the mouth of innocent people before they were put to death. This was most agonizing to them as they would think nothing of death and torture, but were pained to lose their caste in this inhuman manner.

It is also on record that the officers of courts-martial used to swear that they would pronounce the death sentence indiscriminately. "Officers, as they went to sit on the court-martial, swore that they would hang their prisoners, guilty or innocent, and, if any dared to lift up his voice against such indiscriminate vengeance, he was instantly silenced by the clamours of his angry comrades. Prisoners condemned to death after a hasty trial were mocked at and tortured by ignorant privates before the execution, while educated officers looked on and approved".§

*Only one Mrs. Hunter and her baby were killed, but the offender was not a sepoy.

†Dr. Sen, page 338.

‡Kaye, volume II, page 472.

§*History of the Indian Mutiny*, by T. R. Holmes, page 124.

E. RAJPUTANA

The British possessions in Rajputana, though very small, had in them three important military stations—Ajmer, Nasirabad and Nimach. The region was only nominally in the charge of the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces because the direct responsibility for the peace and good government of the tract rested with another officer known as the Governor General's Agent in Rajputana. At the time of rebellion, the Agent was Mr. George Lawrence, a brother of Sir Henry Lawrence who himself had held that office before being put in charge of Avadh.

Of the three stations mentioned, nothing happened at Ajmer which was the arsenal of Rajputana. Two companies of the 15th Native Infantry which were stationed here to guard the arsenal were tactfully replaced, and things went on well for the Government. But mutinies occurred at the other two places.

Nasirabad is a small town about twelve miles from Ajmer. Here were stationed a company of English soldiers with artillery, the 30th Native Infantry, the first Bombay Lancers and the 15th Regiment of sepoys which had been lately brought from Meerut. The sepoys of this regiment were full of rage against the Government. On May 28, all the Indian sepoys at Nasirabad rose in revolt and took possession of the artillery from the European soldiers. In an attempt to recapture the artillery, many English officers were killed, but the Bombay Lancers discreetly retired. Giving up all hope of success, the English fled. The bungalows of the English were burnt; the treasury was taken. A Commander was elected by the sepoys from amongst themselves and from him the sepoys received presents in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. The sepoys then marched off towards the Indian capital.

The subsequent insurrection at Nimach was a small affair. The station lay about 120 miles to the south of Nasirabad. The Indian sepoys there soon learnt of the happenings at Nasirabad. On June 2, Colonel Abbott took an oath from the sepoys—they swore by the Ganga water and the holy Qoran that they would remain true to their salt; on his part the Colonel swore by the holy Bible to his confidence in the faithful intentions of the sepoys who then calmed down. On the evening of the 3rd, however, information was received that European troops were coming. This caused an alarm amongst the sepoys who rose in arms. The English officers fled to Udaipur while the sepoys made off for Delhi. Soon afterwards the station was occupied by contingents of the rulers of Mewar, Kotah and Bundi, all allies of the English.

Trouble also occurred in some of the Indian States of Rajputana. The rulers themselves stood by the British, but the troops of the rulers were excited over the question of religion, and some serious incidents took place here and there, particularly in Kotah. Of the rulers, the Thakur of Awah got into trouble with the British although his quarrel was with his liege-lord, the Maharaja of Jodhpur, and not with the English. But some misunderstanding was caused and the Thakur had to evacuate his stronghold in January, 1858. He later surrendered, was tried but was acquitted.

F. CENTRAL INDIA

Under the supervision of the Central India Agency, there were six Indian States—Gwalior, Indore, Dhar, Dewas, Bhopal and Jawra. At Gwalior and Indore the insurrection was serious. At certain other places too the people under the leadership of their chiefs took up arms.

GWALIOR

Under an old treaty of 'Subsidiary Alliance'

with the East India Company, the Maharaja of Gwalior had to pay the cost of a contingent of troops which the Company maintained at Gwalior. This was known as the Gwalior Contingent and was separate from some troops in the personal service of the Maharaja. It consisted of Indian sepoys under the direct command of British officers, owing allegiance to the Company and not to the Maharaja.

In the evening of June 14, 1857, the Gwalior Contingent rose against its British officers. Houses occupied by them in the Cantonment of Morar, near Gwalior, were set on fire. The men-folk were mostly killed, but the women were spared. During the whole night the search for Englishmen went on. Some found their way to Agra. Even in the Maharaja's Palace no Englishman was allowed to remain on. The English women were collected together and put in prison.

The Maharaja Scindhia acted like a dummy and remained in his Palace. After Gwalior had been cleared of the English, the leaders of the revolt asked the Scindhia to become their leader. He kept them on promise for some time and ultimately declared himself in favour of the British Government. What would have happened had the Scindhia joined the revolutionaries has been described in the Red Pamphlet, page 194, as follows : "It was a most favourable moment for recovering his lost authority. It was merely necessary to accede to the proposal of the mutinous Contingent and to avenge himself on the British. Had he so acceded, had he put himself at their head and, accompanied likewise by his trusty Marathas, proceeded to the scene of action, the consequences would have been most disastrous to ourselves. He would have brought at least twenty thousand troops, one-half of them drilled and disciplined by European officers, on our weak points. Agra and Lucknow would have at once fallen. Havelock would have been shut up in Allahabad and either that fortress would have been besieged or the rebels, giving it a wide berth, would have marched through Benaras on to Calcutta. There were no troops, no fortifications to stop them".

This rebel Contingent remained inactive at Morar Cantonment until September, 1857, when Tatya Tope paid a visit to Gwalior and persuaded it to march to Kalpi to join the nationalist forces concentrated there.

After the defeat of Tatya Tope and the Rani of Jhansi in the battle of Jhansi, much still depended on the battle of Kalpi. With the exception of Delhi, the greatest concentration of Indian soldiers and leaders of the revolt was at Kalpi. The battle of Kalpi was, therefore, of far-reaching consequence both for the Indians as well as the British. The revolutionaries lost this crucial battle and had to flee. They proceeded to Gwalior and occupied it on June 1, 1858.

Much now depended on the attitude which Maharaja Jiyaji Rao Scindhia adopted towards the national cause. If he sided with the revolutionaries the scales could still be turned against the British. On the other hand, if he sided with the British, the revolutionaries would lose heavily from the tactical point of view. The people of Gwalior were all for joining the revolutionaries. But the Maharaja rode off to Agra to seek British protection.

Gwalior remained in the possession of the nationalist forces under Rao Saheb (who had been formally installed as Peshwa at a colourful ceremony in the fort) only for about three weeks. Sir Hugh Rose, who had defeated the nationalist forces at Kalpi, came in pursuit. After fighting some minor engagements, he won the battle of Gwalior on June 19, 1858, and re-installed the Maharaja Scindhia on his gaddi the following day.

On June 14 was published a general order of the Governor General announcing the recovery of the town and fort of Gwalior by Major General Sir Hugh Rose on June 19, 1858, after defeating the rebels who had 'usurped' the authority of the Maharaja

Scindhia. It was further announced that on June 20, 1858, the Maharaja Scindhia, accompanied by the Governor General's Agent for Central India and Sir Hugh Rose and escorted by British troops, was restored to his palace and was welcomed by his subjects. The general order expressed satisfaction in the re-establishment of the administration of His Highness the Maharaja Scindhia. The Governor General also, in appreciation of Maharaja Scindhia's friendship and his gratification at the re-establishment of His Highness' authority, ordered the firing of a Royal salute at every principal station of India. The notification concluded with the words: "The promptitude and success with which the strength of the British Government has been put forth for the restoration of its faithful Ally to the capital of his territory and the continued presence of British troops at Gwalior to support His Highness in the re-establishment of his administration will afford to all a convincing proof that the British Government has the will and the power to defend those who like Maharaja Scindhia did not shirk from their obligation or to hesitate to avow their loyalty".*

INDORE

The Indian troops of Indore also decided, after secret communications, to stage a rebellion. On July 1, 1857, Saadat Khan, a nobleman at the Indore court and an officer of the State Cavalry, ordered the army to fall upon the English at the Residency. The troops then raised the flag of freedom and at once marched with their guns on the Residency. The Indian troops at the Residency, who were with the British officers, refused to fire on the attackers. The English then lost all hope and fled Indore. They were enabled to do so by the magnanimity of the Indian troops at the Residency who had guaranteed them their lives and protected them till the end.

The British suspected that the Maharaja Holkar, Tukoji Rao II, a young man of 21 years, was behind the revolt. The suspicion had arisen from the fact that Saadat Khan had gone straight to the Darbar in his blood-stained clothes after the attack on the Residency and had openly vaunted about his share in the happenings of the morning. But the Maharaja could not arrest him without endangering his own person and he had also to think of the ladies in the palace.

Within the Indore territory and some thirteen miles from the town there was the fort and cantonment of Mhow garrisoned by Indian as well as European troops of the Company. Trouble at Indore was, in a few hours, followed by an out-break at Mhow where Indian sepoys predominated. The commanding officers with two others were killed, but with the aid of his artillery Captain Hungerford held on the post. The next day the mutineers went to Indore, thence to Gwalior.

This Captain Hungerford later assumed the authority of the Political Agent and called for an explanation from the Maharaja Holkar about his suspected part in the uprisings at Indore and Mhow. The Maharaja sent a well-drafted reply through his Prime Minister and Treasurer which might interest the inquisitive reader. He wrote:

"No one in the world regrets more than I do the most heart-rending catastrophe which befell at Indore and Mhow. My troops, probably under the influence of the Mhow mutineers, mutinied openly on the morning of the 1st instant; and the very companies and guns that were sent to protect the Residency picked up a general quarrel with some one and began at once to fire upon the Residency house. The mischief done was great; many lives were lost. No companies of the Contingent, etc., assisted the British

*Notification no. 1855, dated June 24, 1858, N. W. P. Gazette, dated June 29, 1858, page 255.

officers, but it is cheering to hear that Colonel Durand (Political Agent), Mr. Shakespear and family, and others went away quite safe. The rascals then plundered the whole Residency.

"The next morning the Mhow troops, after committing similar brutalities, arrived here; the whole town was in a panic. A greater part of my troops were in open mutiny, and what remained could not be trusted. The Mohammedans raised a standard of 'Deen' and the disorder was complete. Under these sad circumstances the mutineers exacted their own terms. They not only demanded the heads of a few Europeans whom I had concealed in my own palace, but also of a few officers of the court who were supposed to be in the British interest. They prepared to plunder and destroy all if I myself did not come out. I had no alternative left but to offer them my own person, but I would not allow the poor Europeans to be touched before being killed myself.

"After plundering the British treasury, and the carriage from the town, and taking with them all the guns which had gone over to them in a state of mutiny, all the mutineers of this place and of Mhow have marched off last night in a body towards Dewas.

"The tale is a painful one, and will be described to you in detail by Rao Ramchunder and Bukshee Khooman Singh, who are bearers of this to you. I have not, even in a dream, ever deviated from the path of friendship and allegiance to the British Government. I know their sense of justice and honour and will make them pause before they suspect, even for a moment, a friendly Chief, who is so sensible of the obligations* he owes to them, and is ready to do anything for them; but there are catastrophes in this world which cannot be controlled, and the one that has happened is one of the kind".†

SHAHZADA FEROZ SHAH OF MANDISORE

Amongst the top-ranking leaders of the rebellion was Shahzada Feroz Shah, a member of the royal family of Delhi. He was a direct descendant of the first Bahadur Shah and was until 1855 living at Delhi. He made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1855, returning to India in May, 1857. He was then still in his twenties. That he landed in Bombay in May, 1857, is not in doubt, but whether he first went to Delhi has been doubted. In June, he was in Sitamau, whereafter he came to Mandisore (Central India) where he began a *jehad* (religious war) against the British. He was expelled from the town by the Governor, whereupon he retired to an obscure mosque, but soon drew a large following of Afghans and Mekrani Muslims. The Governor of Mandisore was taken prisoner by these people and Prince Feroz Shah was installed as the ruler of the place. In a few months his following increased to about 18,000. He then sent his troops against Nimach which they besieged.

In October-November, 1857, British troops advanced on Mandisore and defeated the forces of Feroz Shah who had earlier left for Gwalior to assume the command of the Indore rebels. He later assisted Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah of Faizabad in his attack on Shahjahanpur and subsequently joined Rao Saheb and Tatya Tope who had by now proceeded to the Nepal Tarai. Thereafter, he wandered in the Sironj jungles. Negotiations for his surrender to the British authorities were for some time on foot, but he eventually refused to lay down arms on the terms desired. He could not accept any

*The young Holkar was indebted to Sir Robert Hamilton, the previous Agent to the Governor General, for his gaddi.
†Forrest. *A History of the Indian Mutiny*, volume III, pp. 110-11.

restriction on his movements, nor would he allow his few followers to be disarmed. After long wanderings, he ultimately found his way to Mecca to die.

OTHERS

There had been rumours that the Maharaja Holkar had joined the rebellion and this led to up-risings outside Indore too. Raja Bakhtawar Singh of Amjhera attacked the British Cantonment at Bhopawar and destroyed it. The few Englishmen there fled for their life. They were first protected by the minor Raja of Jhabua and were later rescued by cavalrymen sent by the Maharaja of Indore. Raja Bakhtawar Singh was later arrested, tried and hanged.

At Dhar, the soldiers of the minor Raja overpowered the old fort, but the situation was controlled by the arrival of English troops.

There was also the Amin of Mahidpur who helped the revolutionaries in the revolt at the Cantonment of Mahidpur. He too was later captured and put to death.

There were others too who identified themselves with the national cause such as Shanker Shah (a descendant of Rani Durgawati) of Garh Mandla, who, with his son, paid the price of patriotism with his life. Raja Thakur Sarju Prasad of Vijai Raghavgarh (in Jabalpur district) was amongst several others who were sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The Adivasis of Sendhwa and Barwani were also organised into revolt by Bhima Naik who fought against the British. He was later arrested and served a term of life imprisonment in the Andamans.

G. BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

In the Bombay Presidency, risings took place at Satara, Kolhapur, Nargund and in the district of Sawantwadi.

At Satara, the uprising was started by a Hindustani chaparasi who was captured and hanged for trying to seduce the 22nd Regiment of the Bombay Native Infantry. He thus spoke to the spectators from the scaffold : "If they were the sons of Hindus and Mohammedans they should rise, if offsprings of Christians they would remain quiet".

Dr. Sen has observed that it was really strange that the Peshwa's cause should find so little support in his own home province.

In the city of Bombay, a conspiracy was discovered by the Police Commissioner and was nipped in the bud.

It was thus that after a feeble and indifferent demonstration of discontent the country of Maharashtra did nothing further in the rebellion.

H. BENGAL AND ORISSA

No organised rebellion took place in these regions, but some disaffected Chiefs showed signs of discontent, and some sporadic outbursts of activity took place in certain areas. Thus the Raja of Panchet, Nilmani Singh, was taken into custody on suspicion of plotting against the Government—a suspicion which was strengthened by the recovery, on search, of arms and military stores from his palace. In a trial on a charge of rebellion he was acquitted, but his imprisonment continued.

The aboriginal tribes of Orissa also showed some signs of overt activities, but their insurrections were not serious.

A close watch was kept by Government on several influential persons, particularly of the zamindar class, whose loyalty was

suspected and some others were detained as State prisoners. Most of them were lodged in the Alipur jail where numerous retainers of ex-King Wajid Ali Shah were also kept.

I. ASSAM

The rebellion in Assam could not take a serious turn because the Government were able to enforce precautionary measures and because of the fact that there were no large military establishments of Indian personnel in that province who could take up arms against the established Government. Raja Kanderpeshwar Singh tried to raise the men of the old Assam Militia to take possession of the province. Maniram Datta, the Diwan of the Raja, was hanged on the charge of inducing his master to revolt and to wage war against the State. The Raja himself was imprisoned.

Several princes of the Manipur royal family were also kept under detention because of reports that some of them were in operation on the banks of the river Barak. One prince of this family, Narendrajit Singh, had actually joined, with his followers, the Chittagong mutineers who, on suffering a defeat near Sylhet, had entered Manipur territory. The Diwan of the State was also associated with nationalist activities. Narendrajit Singh was successful in breaking the arrest and escaping to Manipur.

The Raja of Tippera also came under cloud on account of his lukewarm attitude in the apprehension of the Chittagong and Dacca mutineers.

There were some other incidents of lesser significance but on the whole Assam did not give any serious trouble to the British Government.

J. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the provinces and regions dealt with in the foregoing sections of this chapter there were other places too where the flag of freedom was unfurled by the soldiery assisted by the general population. But as in the places covered by these pages, so in others not so covered, the *modus operandi* was similar in some respects and dissimilar in others. While in many cases the sepoys shot their officers on parade and/or killed them in their bungalows, there were also not wanting instances where protection was given not only to English women and children, but also to the officers themselves. There were yet cases in which the mutinous sepoys made elaborate arrangements for the evacuation of the English from the disturbed station, providing them with money for expenses on the way and bidding them farewell with tears in their eyes.

The general pattern which ran through the rebellion was the capture of British cantonments and stations, the seizure of treasure and the proclamation of Indian rule. In the process of capture, European officers were either killed, as happened in many cases, or were allowed to leave unmolested, as happened in some others.

Whether the revolt was a pre-planned affair or a sporadic rising is a subject which has been dealt with in another chapter, but here it may be mentioned that a sort of vicious circle was in action in spreading the revolt. As a measure of precaution and safety, the British disarmed suspected Indian regiments; this led to panic amongst those regiments which were thought to be loyal, the panic ultimately leading to revolt. There was then the further disarming of even non-suspect battalions and this led to more uprisings, and so on, till the whole of the northern India was thrown in a general conflagration. In many cases the 'mutiny' was the immediate outcome of self-defence which the sepoys adopted following the security measures undertaken by the British ; in some instances these measures consisted of the arrival of European troops.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

THE LAST BATTLE.

The battle of Kalpi in May, 1858, in which the combined Indian forces under several distinguished leaders, amongst whom were the Rao Saheb, the Rani of Jhansi and the Nawab of Banda*, were defeated, was one of the major engagements of the war of 1857. Thereafter, the Indian forces under Tatya Tope captured Gwalior and there Rao Saheb was installed as the Peshwa. After the disaster at Gwalior, Tatya Tope began his remarkable career of guerilla warfare. For almost one year he defied the most vigorous efforts of British commanders to capture him. The gifted leader always outwitted them and even when it seemed that the net was closing round him he effected miraculous escapes and carried out daring counter-strokes which baffled the seasoned English generals running in his pursuit. It was a truly marathon race in which he was never really beaten. Until Sikar, Tatya had led the British generals a jogtrot. "Each one of them coveted the credit of netting the arch-rebel, and free exchange of information amongst the different detachments was probably on that account lacking" (Dr. Sen, p. 374). "The columns were all commanded by officers of zeal and experience", writes Mr. Paget in *Camp and Cantonment* (pages 441-42), "and they all wanted to be the one to catch Tatya Tope; and as each wanted his own column to do it without interference from another, in addition to chasing the rebels, the columns were often running from one another".

In this race, Tatya Tope had been rushing from place to place. From Central India he had gone to Rajputana, thence he ran to Bundelkhand; Madhya Pradesh was his next objective. From Madhya Pradesh he found his way to Baroda; pushed back from there he came to Rajputana again. He had no difficulty in crossing the Chambal, the Betwa and the Narmada, though these rivers hampered the progress of the pursuing British. He was at home in hills and jungles, finding the shortest cuts and getting help and cooperation from the primitive tribes as easily as from the peasants of the plains.

Tatya Tope's last battle, which was also the last battle of the war of liberation of 1857, was fought at Sikar on January 21, 1858, with the British troops under Colonel Holmes. Sikar is a small town in what previously was the Jaipur State, about 40 miles north-west of the city of Jaipur and some 25 miles south-west of Udaipur.

With Tatya Tope were the Rao Saheb, who had been installed as Peshwa at Gwalior, and Prince Feroze Shah and his followers. The Prince had dramatically escaped from Lucknow on its relief by Sir Colin Campbell. He crossed the Ganga in early December 1858 and baffled pursuit for some days. However, on December 17 he was overtaken by General Napier and defeated at Ranod, on the right bank of the Sindh. But the Prince again escaped with a large portion of his force to join Tatya Tope at Indergarh in January 1859.

The nationalist army had by now lost all its hope and enthusiasm and the fight at Sikar

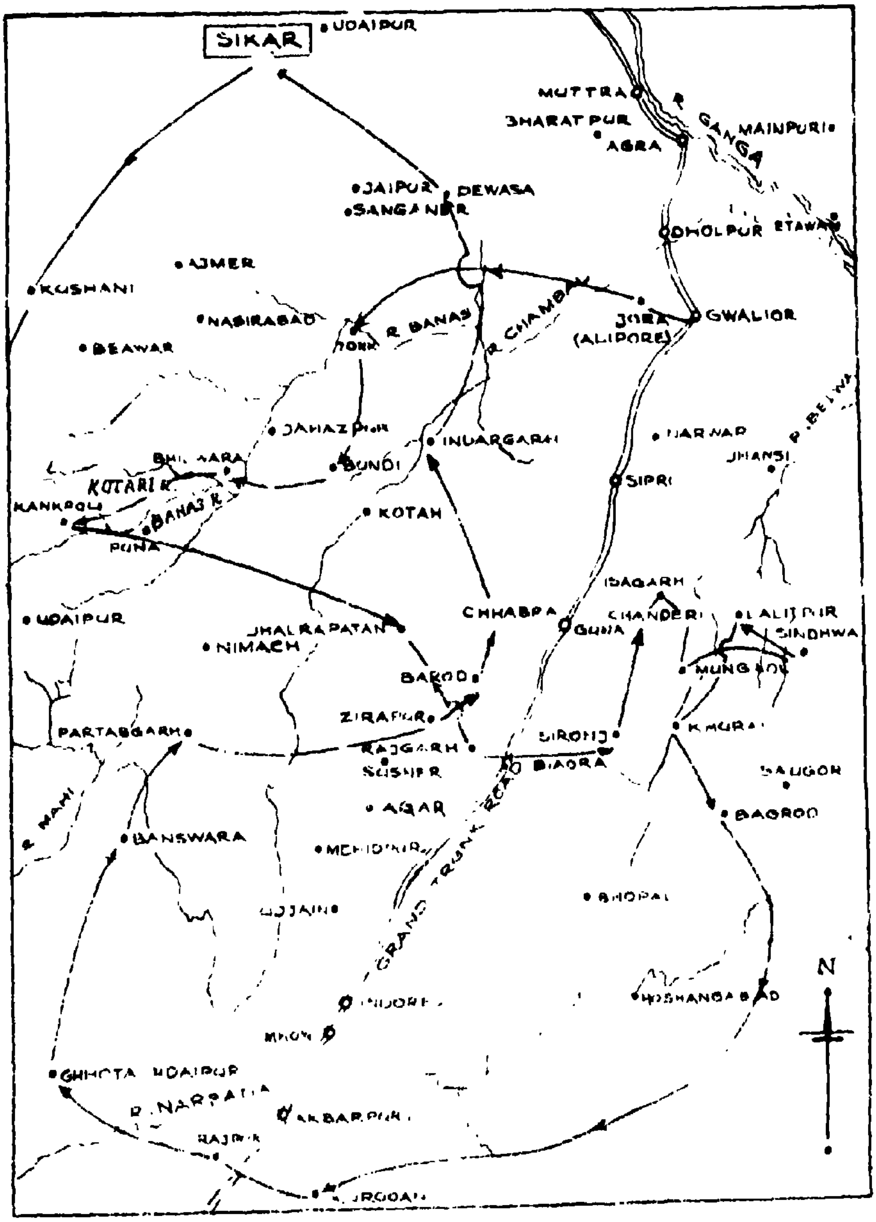
*Tatya Tope was not there. He had gone in disguise to Gwalior to win over the Gwalior Contingent and succeeded in that mission.

was more a routine affair than any feat of arms undertaken with a mission or seriousness. The result was thus a foregone conclusion. After their defeat the patriots lost all nerve and morale. Tatya Tope made his secret way to the Peron forests where he found a temporary shelter until his capture in treacherous circumstances by Major Meade in the following April. Rao Saheb and Feroze Shah, from whom Tatya Tope had voluntarily separated, made their way to Kaushani, some 80 miles east of Jodhpur, reaching their destination on February 10, 1859. They were pursued and their remaining followers were dispersed. Both of them now went and hid themselves in the Saronj jungles some distance from Guna (now in Madhya Pradesh).

Thus ended a great war—a war of liberation without parallel in the history of the world. And though the war was lost, it laid the foundations of the freedom that was to be achieved nearly a century afterwards, not by arms, but by a unique technique discovered and applied by the Father of the Nation.

"Lord Canning presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and begs permission to offer to your Majesty his respectful thanks for your Majesty's most gracious letter of the 18th of May.

"Lord Canning ventures to believe that he is well able to figure to himself the feelings with which your Majesty will have welcomed the termination of the mutiny and rebellion in India, and of the chief miseries which these have brought in their train . . . . . The truth is that, although this termination has long been steadily and surely approaching, it is but just now that it can be said to be complete in the eyes of those who are near to the scene of action. It is only within the last three weeks that the exertions of our troops on the Oudh and Nepaulese frontier, and in some other parts, have been remitted, and almost every Gazette has recounted engagements with the rebels, which, although they have invariably had the same issue, would scarcely have consisted with a declaration that peace and tranquillity were restored. Now, however, military operations have fairly ceased, and the rains and the climate, which would make a continuance of those operations much to be regretted, will do their work amongst the rebels who are still in arms in the Nepaul jungles more terribly than any human avengers."—*From the letter to Queen Victoria from Earl Canning, Governor-General, dated July 4, 1859*



LAST BATTLE AT SIKAR

(January 21, 1859)

Also showing Tatya Tope's race of guerilla war commencing from the disaster at Gwalior in June 1858 and ending with his defeat at Sikar

(Scale: One inch to 100 miles)

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

THE RESTORATION OF BRITISH AUTHORITY

A. THE DUAL POLICY :

REPRISALS AND REPRESSION

CONCILIATORY MEASURES

B. LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS

C. DECREES OF THE GOVERNMENT

D. LORD CANNING'S PROCLAMATION

E. MISCELLANEOUS

ANNEXURE : RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL INDICATING THE POLICY TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE BURNING OF VILLAGES AND OTHER MEASURES OF EXTREME SEVERITY.

"The restoration of British authority was secured not only by the sword, but by unspeakable atrocities. Hundreds were executed without trial. There was hardly any region in Northern India where corpses hanging from the gibbets did not remind the people of the vengeance of the Government."—MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD, IN THE FOREWORD TO DR. SEN'S "EIGHTEEN FIFTY-SEVEN."

A. THE DUAL POLICY

The last event of importance in the rebellion was the capture, trial and death of Tatya Tope in April 1859. With the power of that great leader thus eliminated, the insurrection was practically at an end—practically, because in Bundelkhand, Sagar and Narbada territories, and elsewhere too, bands of nationalist fighters still persisted. They were like the dying embers, still smouldering on, of the fire which had swept over the country. These brave people, though left with no hope of success, would not lay down their arms without a struggle. The Government had to employ many columns of troops to liquidate them. It was not until almost the end of the year 1859 that normal conditions were restored.

In order to suppress the rebellion, so deep and wide-spread, Lord Canning's Government had to resort to contradictory measures. On the one hand repressive measures were adopted and the fighters for freedom dealt with ruthlessly amounting to great cruelty in many cases. Along with them others also suffered only because they had failed to assist the rulers or because they had, under compelling circumstances, sympathised with, or given help to, the mutineers

or their leaders. There were then others who were wholly innocent of any hand in the rebellion, but who had to pay the penalty of suspicion. There were also not wanting cases in which whole villages were set on fire or plundered—the women and the children, the old and the infirm, were the victims equally with the suspects. All this was done to strike terror amongst the people, as it was believed that by these methods the suppression of the revolt would be speedily possible.

As opposed to these atrocities, the Governor-General also took measures to conciliate the general population with a view to bringing in the peaceful elements of the country to his side and also to placate those of the leaders of the revolt whom the administration considered to be men of honour and who would not lay down their arms under threat of force. Amongst these conciliatory or diplomatic measures were the several proclamations of Lord Canning and the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces; a reference to these has been made later in this section.

Some of these proclamations were issued prior to Queen Victoria's proclamation of November 1858, and one proclamation calling upon the people to act loyally to the British Sovereign was issued soon after the Queen's proclamation.

Sorrow of Canning and Victoria

It must also be recorded to the credit of Lord Canning that though he could not prevent the atrocities which he abhorred he laid down for himself a judicious policy to follow: "I will not govern in anger. Justice, and that as stern, as inflexible as law and might can make it, I will deal out. But I will never allow an angry or indiscriminate act or word to proceed from the Government, so long as I am responsible for it."

And though Lord Canning cannot be absolved of the moral responsibility for the ruthlessness committed, he himself was unhappy over the happenings. Writing to Queen Victoria he frankly admitted that "there is a rabid and indiscriminate vindictiveness abroad, even amongst many who ought to set a better example, which it is impossible to contemplate without a feeling of shame for one's countrymen". This found a response from the Queen: "Lord Canning will easily believe how entirely the Queen shares his feelings of sorrow and indignation at the un-Christian spirit shown, alas! to a great extent here by the public towards India in general."

This policy, which may be called the dual-faced policy, generally ran through the entire history of British rule in India. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has, in his *Discovery of India*, referred to one aspect of this policy by observing that on the one hand the British policy was to secure the unification of India, and to this end various measures were adopted from time to time, and on the other hand there was also the policy to break feelings of unity amongst the Indian people by encouraging some times one vested interest and some times the other, and following what is generally called the policy of divide and rule.

British resourcefulness had been taxed to the extreme in recovering the empire and, at times, it seemed as if the British rule in India was doomed. In any case, but for certain chance successes the suppression of the revolt could not have been accomplished within the time in which it was actually suppressed, and, but for these chances, the bloodshed and the misery on both sides would have been much more appalling.

REPRISALS AND REPRESSION

Many Englishmen were against the policy of ruthlessness that was adopted. We have already quoted the feelings of the Governor-General himself. Sir William Russell was another distinguished person who strongly recorded his protest against "all these kinds of vindictive, non-Christian atrocities such

as sewing Mohammedans in pig-skins, smearing them with pork-fat before execution and burning their bodies and forcing Hindus to defile themselves." He characterized them as spiritual and mental tortures to which the foreign rulers had no right to resort and which they dared not perpetrate in Europe, and added that they would ultimately recoil on the English people themselves.

Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell has candidly described the brutalising of Indian sepoys as well as civilians by European troops. In respect of Civil Commissioners appointed for the trial of 'Mutiny offences' he has not hesitated to express his disapprobation of their methods. In this connection the following observations from his *Reminiscences* are remarkable for the straight-forward manner in which he admits the excesses perpetrated by his countrymen : "Asiatic campaigns have always been conducted in a more remorseless spirit than those between European nations, but the war of the Mutiny, as I have before remarked in these Reminiscences, was far worse than the usual type of even Asiatic fighting. It was something horrible and down-right brutalising for an English army to be engaged in such a struggle in which no quarter was ever given or asked. It was a war of down-right butchery. Whenever the rebels met a Christian or a white man he was killed without pity or remorse, and every native who had assisted any such to escape, or was known to have concealed them, was as remorselessly put to death wherever the rebels had the ascendant. And wherever a European in power, either civil or military, met a rebel in arms, or any native whatever on whom suspicion rested, his shrift was as short and his fate as sure. The farce of putting an accused native on his trial before any of the civil officers attached to the different army-columns, after the civil power commenced to re-assert its authority, was simply a parody on justice and a protraction of cruelty. Under martial law, punishment, whether deserved or not, was stern but sharp. But the civilian officers attached to the different movable columns for the trial of rebels, as far as they came under my notice, were even more relentless. No doubt, these men excused themselves by the consideration that they were engaged in suppressing rebellion and mutiny, and that the actors on the other side had perpetrated great crimes."

"The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, was wholly opposed to extreme measures and deplored the whole-sale executions by the civil power . . . .
On one occasion he expressed his great disgust at seeing a mango-tope between Fatehgarh and Kanpur full of rotting corpses of men who had been hung by the orders of the Special Commissioners a few days before".

The extent of brutality committed by the authorities has been described also by many other English authors who have expressed their strong disapproval and even abhorrence at those foul deeds. Reference to such atrocities has been made in several of the earlier chapters. Here are some further extracts :

"We set fire to a large village which was full of them. We surrounded them, and when they came rushing out of the flames, we shot them"—Charles Ball, *Indian Mutiny*, volume I, pages 243-44.

". . . . . . and I know that at Allahabad there were two whole-sale executions . . . . And afterwards Neill did things almost more than the massacre, putting to death with deliberate torture in a way that has never been proved against the natives."—Sir George Campbell, Provisional Civil Commissioner in the Mutiny, as quoted in *The Other Side of the Medal* by Edward Thomson, page 81.

"Of the prisoners of the 55th, a more awful example was made. They were tried, condemned and every third man selected to be blown away from guns."—Narratives of the Indian Revolt, page 36.

" Soldiers and civilians alike were holding bloody assizes, or slaying natives without any assize at all, regardless of sex or age. Afterwards, the thirst for blood grew stronger still. It is on the records of our British Parliament, in papers sent home by the Governor-General of India in Council that 'the aged women and children are sacrificed, as well as those guilty of rebellion'. They were not deliberately hanged, but burnt to death in their villages, perhaps now and then accidentally shot. Englishmen did not hesitate to boast, or to record their boasting in writing, that they had spared no one, and that peppering away at niggers was very pleasant pastime, enjoyed amazingly. And it has been stated, in a book published by official authorities, that 'for three months eight dead-carts daily went their rounds from sunrise to sunset to take down the corpses which hung at the cross-roads and market places', and that 'six thousand beings had been thus summarily disposed of and launched into eternity.'* .... an Englishman is almost suffocated with indignation when he reads that Mr. Chambers or Miss Jennings was hacked to death, by a dusky ruffian, but in native histories or, history being wanting, in native legends and traditions, it may be recorded against our people that mothers and wives and children, with less familiar names, fell miserable victims to the first swoop of English vengeance...." —Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War*, volume II.

" That parade was a strange scene. ..... The troops were drawn up on three sides of a square, the fourth side being occupied by ten guns. .... The first ten of the prisoners were then dashed to the guns, the artillery officer waved his sword, you heard the roar of the guns and above the smoke you saw legs, arms and heads flying in all directions. There were four of these salvoes and at each a sort of buzz went through the whole mass of the troops, a sort of murmur of horror. Since that time, we have had execution parades once or twice a week, and such is the force of habit we now think little of them"—Narratives of the Indian Revolt, page 36.

" One trip I enjoyed amazingly; we got on board a steamer with a gun, while the Sikhs and the fusiliers marched up to the city.† We steamed up throwing shots right and left till we got up to the bad places, when we went on the shore and peppered away with our guns, my old double-barrel bringing down several niggers, so thirsty for vengeance I was. We fired the places right and left and the flames shot up to the heavens as they spread, fanned by the breeze, showing that the day of vengeance had fallen on the treacherous villains. Everyday, we had expeditions to burn and destroy disaffected villages, and we have taken our revenge. . . .... We have the power of life in our hands, and I assure you we spare not. ..... The condemned culprit is placed under a tree, with a rope round his neck, on the top of a carriage, and when it is pulled off, he swings."—Letter quoted by Charles Ball in *Indian Mutiny*, volume I, page 257.

"General Havelock began to wreak a terrible vengeance for the death of Sir Hugh Wheeler. Batch upon batch of natives mounted the scaffold. The calmness of mind and nobility of demeanour which some of the revolutionaries showed at the time of death was such as would do credit to those who martyred themselves for devotion to a principle."—Charles Ball, *Indian Mutiny*, volume I, page 388.

* At Allahabad

†Allahabad.



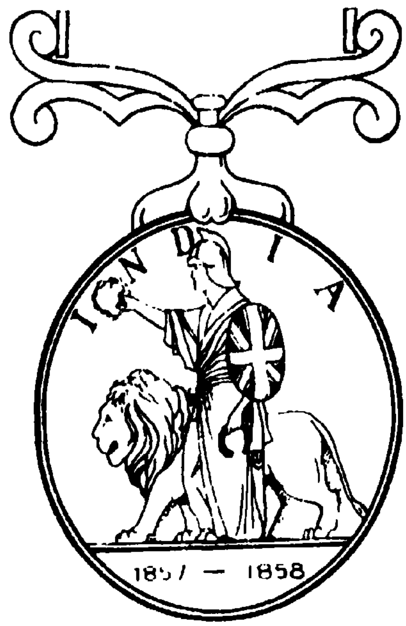
THE VICTORIA CROSS

Several British Military officers were awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest honour that can be bestowed by the British Sovereign for valour on the field of battle. A civilian by name T. H. Kavanagh also received the award for his daring exploits connected with the relief of the Lucknow Residency. Accounts of these can be read in his book *How I Won the Victoria Cross*. The medal was instituted by Queen Victoria in 1856 but it was not until 1911 that the award was opened to Indian soldiers. Thereafter a proportionately larger number of Indian combatants received the Cross in the First World War, thus proving the fighting qualities of Indian soldiers. The medal is cast in bronze.



THE MUTINY MEDAL

This was the medal which was awarded posthumously in respect of soldiers on the British side who died fighting bravely in military actions during the "Mutiny".



INDIAN MUTINY MEDAL

This was another decoration awarded to British troops employed in the suppression of the Mutiny. It was the last medal given by the East India Company in the name of the British Government. There were the following bars to it: "DELHI", granted to those employed against Delhi from May to September 1857; "DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW", "RELIEF OF LUCKNOW" and "LUCKNOW" given to those connected with the operations in Lucknow, and "CENTRAL INDIA" granted to troops employed in the actions in Jhansi, Kalpi, Gwalior and other places in Central India from January to June 1858.

The obverse of the medal has as usual, the Queen's head while the reverse, as shown above, has a standing figure of Britannia with a shield, and her right hand outstretched with a wreath of laurel, the British lion appearing in the background.

" Without the least agitation he mounted the scaffold even as a yogi enters samadhi !" *Ibid.*

" . . . . . letters which reached home in 1857 in which an officer in high command during the march upon Kanpur reported 'good bag to-day; polished off rebels,' it being borne in mind that the 'rebels' thus hanged or blown from guns were not taken in arms, but villagers apprehended on 'suspicion'. During this march, atrocities were committed in the burning of villages and massacre of innocent inhabitants at which Mohammad Tughlak would have stood ashamed."—*Greater Britain* by Sir Charles Dilke.

" Old men who had done us no harm, helpless women with suckling infants at their chests, felt the weight of our vengeance no less than the vilest malefactors"—Holmes' *Sepoy War*, pages 229-30.

" All the city* people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty persons were hiding. These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon. I am glad to say that they were disappointed."—Letter in the *Bombay Telegraph* by Montgomery Martin.

" A general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi, a large number of whom were known to wish our success, was openly proclaimed."—Chaplain's *Narrative of the Siege of Delhi*, quoted by Kaye.

" After the siege* was over, the outrages committed by our army are simply heart-rending. A whole-sale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend and foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadir Shah !"—*Life of Lord Lawrence*, volume II, page 262.

Thus, "man's inhumanity against man made countless angels weep". Thus was the revolt suppressed. And thus failed the grand endeavour of a great people to throw a foreign power out of the country. It has been suggested that there were many who were fighting for the revival of the vanished glories of the Moghal empire; many others who aimed at re-establishing the power of the Peshwas.† Be that as it may, the uncontrovertible fact remains that the Indian people made a gigantic struggle for freedom—a struggle which has a unique place in the history of the world.

CONCILIATORY MEASURES

Amongst the conciliatory measures adopted by the Government there were certain proclamations of Lord Canning, the Governor-General, and the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces. Most of these were issued soon after the outbreaks at Meerut and Delhi. Almost the first of these issued by the Governor-General on May 16, 1857, made this announcement :

"The Governor-General of India in Council has warned the Army of Bengal that the tales by which the men of certain regiments have been led to suspect that offence to their religion or injury to their caste is meditated by the Government of India are malicious falsehoods.

"The Governor-General in Council has learnt that this suspicion continues to be propagated by designing and evil-minded men, not only in the Army, but amongst other classes of the people.

"He knows that endeavours are made to persuade Hindus and Mussulmans, soldiers and civil subjects, that their religion is threatened, secretly as well as openly, by the acts of the Government, and that the Government is seeking in various ways to entrap them into a loss of caste for purposes of its own.

"Some have been already deceived and led astray by these tales.

"Once more then the Governor-General in Council warns all classes against the deceptions that are practised on them.

"The Government of India has invariably treated the religious feelings of all its subjects with careful respect. The Governor-General in Council has declared that it will never cease to do so. He now repeats that declaration, and he emphatically proclaims that the Government

* Of Delhi.
† P. E. Roberts, for instance.

of India entertains no desire to interfere with their religion or caste, and that nothing has been or will be done by the Government to affect the free exercise of the observance of religion or caste by every class of the people.

"The Government of India has never deceived its subjects, therefore the Governor-General in Council now calls upon them to refuse their belief to seditious lies.

"This notice is addressed to those who hitherto, by habitual loyalty and orderly conduct, have shown their attachment to the Government and a well-founded faith in its protection and justice.

"The Governor-General in Council enjoins all such persons to pause before they listen to false guides and traitors who would lead them into danger and disgrace."

Simultaneously, on the same day (May 16, 1857), the Lieutenant Governor also issued a proclamation informing the "faithful subjects of the British Government", that active measures had been commenced "for the signal punishment" of the mutineers of Meerut and Delhi and calling upon the "loyal people" to watch the attempts at flight of the insurgents after they had been attacked and dispersed by the British troops. It was added that the British Government would always highly value and reward the services of its good soldiers, that it would ever strictly respect their rights, usages and religious feelings and consider them as its children, entitled to its protection in their vigour and in old age, and finally that "it will punish the acts of faithless traitors with swift justice."

In an earlier proclamation, issued a day before, the Lieutenant Governor had declared that every landholder joining in the resistance against Government would forfeit all rights in his lands which would be confiscated and transferred in perpetuity to the "faithful taluqdars and zamindars of the same quarters who may shew, by their acts of obedience to the Government and exertions for the maintenance of tranquillity, that they deserve reward and favour from the State." It concluded with the words: "The powerful British Government will in a marked manner recompense its friends and punish its enemies."*

By another proclamation issued on May 25, 1857, the Lieutenant Governor made it known that all soldiers engaged in the "late disturbances" who were desirous of going to their homes and who give up their arms at the nearest civil or military Government post, and retire quietly, would be permitted to do so unmolested. Further, that all those who appeared in arms against the Government after this proclamation would be treated as open enemies.

By the proclamation of September 29, 1857, the Lieutenant Governor called upon all landholders and tenants, and all well-disposed subjects, to give all possible assistance to the authorities in "bringing to justice the sepoys who have mutinied upon lying pretexts and interferences with their religion and caste and associated themselves with jail felons and miscreants of every description after vain efforts to contend with the British Government at Delhi and elsewhere, and are now fleeing from the punishment due to their crimes."

The Governor-General also announced the institution of a medal by Queen Victoria to be granted to the troops in the service of the Queen (that is troops which came from England and which formed part of the Home Army as distinguished from the Company's Army) and of the East India Company who had been employed in the suppression of the rebellion. This medal was also available to those civilians who had been "actively engaged in the field, or otherwise, before the enemy during the operations".†

In order to encourage loyalty amongst Indian soldiers, increased power was delegated to commanding officers and high civil officials to promote Indian non-commissioned officers

*Proclamation dated May 15, 1857, published in the Agra Government Gazette, dated May 16, 1857, Extraordinary.
†Notification no. 562, dated August 20, 1858.

and soldiers on the scene of their "good deeds" and to confer upon them the "Order of Merit". The idea was that the reward for "eminent gallantry, loyalty and good conduct" might be prompt and might be conferred on the soldier in the sight of his comrades.

It being the desire of the Governor-General "to seek out, acknowledge and suitably reward meritorious conduct" of persons who had rendered valuable assistance to Government during the rebellion, lists of such persons were prepared. These lists were to include all persons who had rendered aid either in the repulse of mutineers, in maintaining order or subordination in giving protection to Government's officers or other European refugees, or had assisted Government in any other way.* After the completion of these lists, rewards in various forms were distributed, mainly by the grant of land in muafi tenure and of cash rewards. In some cases villagers of specified villages were given a grant equal to one year's rent. As a mark of the approbation of Government of the services rendered by a village in the district of Sultanpur, a well was constructed for the convenience of the inhabitants.†

On December 17, 1857, a notification was issued prohibiting the indiscriminate plunder of loyal as well as disaffected villages by detachments of troops employed in restoring order.

B. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

The Governor-General in Council passed several enactments providing for the punishment of persons who took part in the rebellion and also providing for certain other matters for subduing the revolt, such as forfeiture of property. There were also passed certain Acts intended to meet the situations arising out of the rebellion, and finally in 1860 an indemnity law was made for the purpose of indemnifying officers of Government as well as non-officials in respect of certain acts done in the course of the rebellion and its suppression.

The purport of some of the important Acts is as follows :

ACTS OF 1857

(1) *Trial and punishment of offences against the Articles of War for the Native Army*—The Act was meant to facilitate the trial and punishment of offences committed by Indian officers, soldiers or followers in the service of the Company. Under it Military officers could appoint courts-martial for the trial of these persons (Act VII of 1857).

(2) *Prevention, trial and punishment of offences against the State*—The offences covered were rebellion, waging of war against Government and harbouring or concealing offenders guilty of the above offences. The punishment provided for rebellion or war was death or transportation for life or imprisonment up to 14 years with forfeiture of property, a lesser punishment being provided for harbouring or concealment. Provision was also made for houses being searched for arms and the confiscation of the arms discovered therein (Act XI of 1857).

(3) *Apprehension and trial of Indian officers and soldiers for mutiny and desertion*—The sentence passed in such cases was

* N. W. P. Gazette, dated March 23, 1858 page 21.

†N. W. P. Gazette, dated March 23, 1858.

unappealable, and if the sentence was death it could be carried into execution immediately. Larger landholders were also made responsible for communicating to Government information about persons guilty of mutiny or desertion hiding in their estates (Act XVII of 1857).

(4) *Forfeiture of property for mutiny*—It was provided that any Indian officer or soldier convicted of mutiny shall forfeit all his property of every description (Act XXV of 1857).

(5) *Importation, manufacture and sale of arms and ammunition and regulation of the right to keep arms*—Government were also authorized to seize arms and to disarm persons going armed. Penalties were provided for manufacturing or dealing in arms and ammunition without license. Informers were to be rewarded. (Act XXVIII of 1857).

(6) *Marking of offenders*—An Act was passed on December 17, 1857, amending the Articles of War for the Native Army. The number of the Act was XXXII of 1857. This Act provided for the marking of offenders convicted of mutiny or desertion. It gave power to the Government to direct that all or any person or persons subject to the Articles of War for the Native Army who may have been convicted of mutiny or desertion shall be marked on the arm with the letter M in case of conviction for mutiny and with D on conviction for desertion. This mark was to be put on the left side two inches below the arm-pit. In addition, he could also be marked with any other mark for the purpose of identifying him at any future time or of denoting the punishment to which he had been sentenced. The letter was not to be less than one inch long and was to be made in such a manner that it was not liable to be obliterated. Courts of law were also given similar powers of ordering the marking in like manner.*

ACTS OF 1858

(7) *Escaped offenders*—Offenders escaping from jail and persons harbouring them were to be punished. The necessity for the Act arose from the fact that during the rebellion many jails were broken open and the prisoners were forcibly released and, therefore, after the restoration of order it was considered expedient to provide for the apprehension of such of these offenders as had been convicted of serious offences. Provision was also made for the punishment of offenders who, having escaped from jail since May 1857, did not surrender themselves within one month from the passing of the Act. Transportation for life was the punishment for such persons. Landholders were declared accountable for giving information of any escaped prisoners hiding themselves within the limits of their estates. Neglect to do so was punishable with imprisonment up to six months and fine up to Rs.200 (Act V of 1858).

(8) *Impressment of labour*—After the restoration of British authority it became necessary to construct numerous buildings for the accommodation of European troops the number of which had greatly increased by re-inforcements brought from England. But artisans and labourers were difficult to procure for none would come willingly. As there was no law to compel the attendance of these men it became necessary to pass an Act for compelling this class of people to erect the buildings. In other words, it was found necessary to

*N. W. P. Gazette, dated April 15, 1858.

"impress" artisans and labourers for this purpose. This word "impress" and its grammatical variation "impressment" are technical terms of law.

The Act provided that every person impressed shall be paid the full market value of his labour. The Act also gave authority to officers to impress boats, carts, bullocks or other animals, which were considered necessary for the erection of military works. For these also full hire at market rates was to be paid. The Act also provided for the punishment of persons who absconded or concealed themselves after impressment or who refused to work. The extent of punishment was fine up to Rs.50 and, in default, corporal punishment up to 15 stripes with a ratan. Europeans and females were exempted from corporal punishment. The Act, which came into force in January 1858, was of a limited duration (Act VI of 1858).

(9) *Confiscation of villages*—Provision was made authorizing the confiscation of villages, the imposition of fines and the forfeiture of offices in cases of rebellion and other crimes committed by inhabitants of villages or by members of tribes. Proprietors of land who failed to assist in the suppression of the rebellion or in the apprehension of rebels, mutineers or deserters were also made liable to punishment. (Act X of 1858).

(10) *Corporal punishment*—During the rebellion, Jail buildings in many parts of India had been destroyed making it difficult to confine convicts sentenced to imprisonment. To meet this difficulty, an Act was passed providing that, instead of sentencing an offender to imprisonment or any other punishment, the magistrate may sentence him to corporal punishment not exceeding 30 stripes with a ratan in respect of certain specified offences such as robbery, theft, receiving of plundered property. The Act also provided for corporal punishment in certain other classes of cases in lieu of fines. Europeans, Americans and females were specifically exempted from the operation of this Act.

The life of the Act was two years with effect from April 4, 1858. Its number was XI of 1858 and it bore the title "An Act to authorize corporal punishment in certain cases".

(11) *Authentication of stamps*—In another Act, provision was made for the authentication of stamps issued from the Stamp Office, Calcutta. This was necessitated by the fact that in the course of the rebellion a large quantity of stamp paper had been plundered from treasuries and from the possession of stamp-vendors, and it was necessary to prevent the use of this plundered paper for writing deeds (Act XIX of 1858).

ACTS OF 1859

(12) *Forfeited property*—An Act was passed to provide for the adjudication of claims to property seized as forfeited. Courts of special commission were to be appointed by the Government and were to consist of not less than three Commissioners who were to sit together for the trial and determination of claims. The Act also defined the powers of officers to whom commissions may have been issued for the trial of 'heinous offences'.

ACTS OF 1860

(13) *Indemnity Act*—Act no. XXXIV of 1860 indemnified officials as well as non-officials in respect of fines and contributions levied, and acts done "during the late disturbances". The necessity for this Act arose from the fact that during the rebellion officers

of Government had collected fines and penalties in respect of acts which, under the law as it stood before the passing of this Act, had not been declared offences punishable in any manner. Therefore, the levy of fines and penalties for such acts was illegal. It was to legalise them that the Act was passed.

Again, contributions had been collected compulsorily from the members of the public for the reconstruction of, or repairs to, public buildings destroyed during the rebellion, as well as for other purposes. Such compulsory contributions were also illegal because they were not authorised by the law then in force. The above Act legalised these contributions too.

But for the passing of this Act the officers concerned had rendered themselves liable to civil as well as criminal action in respect of their illegal acts. It was necessary, therefore, to indemnify the officers for those acts, and provision to this effect was made in the Act.

The date with effect from which the indemnity provided for in the Act was operative was May 10, 1857, which was the date recognised as the date on which the rebellion commenced.*

The Act covered only those cases in which fines and contributions had actually been collected. It did not authorise the levy of any fine or penalty, or contribution, not already levied.

C. DECREES OF GOVERNMENT

The functions of the ordinary criminal courts were suspended and martial law established in almost the whole of the North-Western Provinces and Avadh. It was laid down that immediate trials would be held by courts-martial of persons taken in arms in open hostility against the British Government or otherwise taking part in the up-rising and that they would, for certain specified offences, be liable to the punishment of death and the forfeiture of all their property, movable and immovable. This was done under the powers vested in the Government by Regulation X of 1804. Gradually, the relative notifications were recalled so that by July 1859, martial law ceased to exist in those territories.

The Governor-General also decided to disarm parts of the North-Western Provinces lying north of the rivers Yamuna and Ganga, and further directed that a general search and seizure of arms by Magistrates and Collectors shall be made.

The proclamation of the Local Government of Agra, dated September 29, 1857, called upon landowners and loyal subjects to give assistance to Government in the arrest of rebel sepoys and to render other assistance. All persons were also warned against purchasing arms, elephants, horses, camels and other Government property taken by the rebels under pain of the "severest penalties". Persons obtaining such property and taking it immediately to the nearest civil or military authority were promised rewards.

In addition to the confiscation of landed property and deposits in treasuries belonging to persons who had taken up arms against the Government, elephants, camels, bullocks and mules were also confiscated in large numbers. The fit animals were made over to the Commissariat, others were sold by auction. The Governor-General in Council promulgated in December 1857 and March 1858 a set of rules for the forfeiture of military pensions. The spirit of the rules was made

* This was the date on which the mutiny at Meerut took place.

applicable to civil pensions also. According to these rules every pensioner of Government who:

(a) concealed or harboured any person whom he knew to have been guilty of mutiny or acts similar thereto, or

(b) failed to do his utmost to secure the apprehension and conviction of such offender, or

(c) neglected to give immediate notice to the civil or military authorities of any mutinous or rebellious designs of which he had information

was, in addition to the punishment to which he was liable by law, to forfeit his pension.

It was further laid down that all male pensioners who shall fail to present themselves at the treasury or who, coming in, shall fail to establish a reasonable ground for believing that they had not only not joined in the rebellion, but that they had according to their opportunities taken part with the Government, would forfeit their pensions.

Upon the arrival of any pensioner at the treasury a committee of officers was to make a rigid enquiry and to record its opinion whether or not the conduct of such pensioner had been such as to call for a forfeiture of his pension.

The following classes of pensioners were exempted from forfeiture under this order: "Cripples, and those who were infirm from great age or the effects of disease, whether native officers or soldiers, or their heirs, and who from those causes had not been accustomed theretofore to attend in person to receive their pensions; insane pensioners; women and children and widows of members of the ORDER OF MERIT."

Many treasuries in the North-Western Provinces had been plundered during the rebellion. The question arose about the refund of the deposits which members of the public had made in them prior to the out-break. The Government of India approved the following principles to be observed throughout the country in dealing with claims for the refund of such deposits:

1st. All deposits made in pursuance of legal process or judicial procedure are repayable by Government.

2nd. Deposits made for the convenience of Government to be repaid.

3rd. Deposits made for the convenience of depositors, other than those under the first head, to be at the risk of depositors, payment in case of plunder being withheld. Every case of doubt to be referred to Government for orders*.

As regards deposits payable to persons who had been adjudged rebels, the Governor-General directed that such deposits should, as a matter of course, be carried to the credit of the State, the sentence so adjudging them being accompanied by the sentence of confiscation**.

D. LORD CANNING'S PROCLAMATION

In regard to Avadh in which the rebellion was most acute and deep-rooted, Lord Canning adopted the extraordinary course of declaring the confiscation of estates of the taluqdars with certain specified exceptions. The confiscation was made on the final recapture of Lucknow by Sir Colin Campbell on March 15, 1858, by a proclamation issued on that

* Circular no. 5, dated December 13, 1858, of the Sudder Board of Revenue, published in the N. W. P. Gazette, dated December 21, 1858.

** N. W. P. Gazette dated May 25, 1858, page 164.

date and which in history is famous as *Lord Canning's Proclamation*. It is reproduced below :

"The Army of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is in possession of Lucknow, and the city lies at the mercy of the British Government whose authority it has for nine months rebelliously defied and resisted.

This resistance, began by a mutinous soldiery, has found support from the inhabitants of the city and of the Province of Oudh at large. Many who owed their prosperity to the British Government as well as those who believed themselves aggrieved by it have joined in this bad cause and have ranged themselves with the enemies of the State. They have been guilty of a great crime and have subjected themselves to a just retribution.

The capital of their country is now once more in the hands of the British Troops.

From this day it will be held by force which nothing can withstand and the authority of the Government will be carried into every corner of the Province.

The time then has come at which the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General of India deems it right to make known the mode in which the British Government will deal with the Taluqdars, Chiefs, Landholders of Oudh, and their followers.

The first care of the Governor-General will be to reward those who have been steadfast in their allegiance at a time when the authority of the Government was partially overborne, and who have proved this by the support and assistance which they have given to British officers.

Therefore, the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General hereby declares, that Drigbyjeye Singh, Rajah of Bulrampore, Koolwunt Singh, Rajah of Padnaha, Rao Hurdeo Buksh Singh of Kutiaree, Kashee Pershad, Taluqdar of Sissaindee, Zuber Singh, Zemindar of Gopal Khair, and Chundee Lall, Zemindar of Moraon (Baiswarah), are henceforward the sole, hereditary proprietors of the land which they held when Oudh came under British Rule, subject only to such moderate assessment as may be imposed upon them; and that these loyal men will be further rewarded in such manner and to such extent as, upon consideration of their merits and their position, the Governor General shall determine

A proportionate measure of reward and honour, according to their deserts, will be conferred upon others in whose favour like claims may be established to the satisfaction of the Government.

The Governor General further proclaims to the people of Oudh that, with the above-mentioned exceptions, the proprietary right in the soil of the Province is confiscated to the British Government which will dispose of that right in such manner as to it may seem fitting.

To those Taluqdars, Chiefs, Landholders, with their followers, who shall make immediate submission to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh, surrendering their arms and obeying his orders, the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General promises that their lives and honour shall be safe, provided that their hands are not stained with English blood murderously shed.

But as regards any further indulgence which may be extended to them, and the condition in which they may hereafter be placed, they must throw themselves upon the justice and mercy of the British Government.

To those amongst them who shall promptly come forward and give to the Chief Commissioner their support in the restoration of peace and order, this indulgence will be large and the Governor-General will be ready to view liberally the claim which they may thus acquire to a restitution of their former rights.

As participation in the murder of Englishmen or Englishwomen will exclude those who are guilty of it from all mercy, so will those who have protected English lives be specially entitled to consideration and leniency."

The effect of Lord Canning's Proclamation was that it swept away all prior titles, though the Government, when engaged in the work of pacifying and settling of the country, did not make an arbitrary or wholly new re-distribution of property or proceed upon the notion that prior rights were to go for nothing. In very many cases, probably in the great bulk of properties, they inquired who would be entitled if no confiscation had taken place, and effected settlements with those persons.

A few days later, the Chief Commissioner of Avadh, Sir James Outram, addressed a parwanah to the landholders of Avadh, sending this Proclamation with it and informing them that if they at once came in ready to obey his orders, provided they had taken no part in the atrocities committed on helpless Europeans, none of their lands would be confiscated and that their claims to lands held by them prior to annexation would be heard.

Later, in June 1858, the Chief Commissioner addressed a letter to all the taluqdars informing them that if they presented themselves at Lucknow and tendered their allegiance all their offences would be forgiven. It was added that many taluqdars had presented themselves and had been pardoned and their estates re-settled with them for three years, but that some were still at large in rebellion. It also contained the following conciliatory sentiments :

"The Chief Commissioner has been given to understand that some persons, from ignorance and evil tendency, are trying to mislead Taluqdars and others with evil reports and false representations to the effect that the Government should not be trusted as all the persons returning to the city will be made Christians, and those who will not present themselves will be hanged. These groundless rumours are spread by those only who, from complicity in the murder of Europeans, are beyond the pale

of mercy and pardon; and because they are well aware of this, they wish to mislead you also into the belief that the Government is equally severe upon you, and by keeping you back wish to deter you from taking advantage of the period of amnesty, after which, as a matter of course, you will be charged with protracted rebellion.

The object with which this letter is written to you is to assure you that the Government will preserve to you your life and property and confirm you in the estates possessed by you during the nawabee. A *rahdaree perwanah* (safe conduct pass) is herein enclosed to pass you without any hindrance to the city; and on your presenting yourself, the conditions of the *puttahs* and *kabooliyats* will be made known to you, which if not acceptable, you will be at liberty to return unmolested.

The term allowed in the pass is 30 days within which period they should attend; if not, the Government forces will proceed against the estates of recusants and destroy them as they have done the city of Lucknow, and such recusants will meet with the punishment which their protracted rebellion will entail upon them.

This is the last invitation to be issued, and if you do not take advantage of its liberal provisions, the result will be unfavourable to you; but the Chief Commissioner confidently trusts you will see the advantage to be gained by rendering your allegiance and the consequent benefit resulting to yourself therefrom.

If you cannot present yourself, you may send your agent to represent you."

Lord Canning's Proclamation was the subject of some harsh criticism in the House of Commons where members accused the Governor-General of an unjust and repressive act in confiscating estates in this arbitrary and summary manner. The Chief Commissioner as well as certain senior members of the Civil Service were opposed to its issue but Lord Canning overruled them all.

The Proclamation had not, however, the desired effect of obtaining the submission of the taluqdars, although the Chief Commissioner did much to pacify them. But they had little faith in the promises of the Government and the result was that the field of rebellion was widened instead of being shortened. And it took many more months before the backbone of the revolt in Avadh was broken. Rana Beni Madhav Singh, one of the several taluqdars who did not surrender, fought to the last of his resources and crossed into Nepal only when reduced to extremities.

E. MISCELLANEOUS

Lord Canning shifts to Allahabad.

In February, 1858, the Governor-General himself took over the direct administration of the North-Western Provinces with the idea of more effectively subduing the rebellion. In order to be nearer the main scene of operations, Lord Canning also moved his headquarters from Calcutta to Allahabad as a temporary expedient. In consequence, the office of the Lieutenant Governor of the province was held in abeyance. It was also provided that for the time being the Governor-General alone would exercise, during his absence from the Council of India, whose seat remained at Calcutta, all the powers which were exercisable by the Governor-General in Council, in every case in which he thought it expedient to do so. During this period of direct administration of the North-Western Provinces by the Governor-General, the orders and notifications pertaining to the Local Government were issued in the name of the Governor-General and were authenticated by the signature of a Secretary to the Government of India who described himself as "Secretary to the Government of India with the Governor-General."

Maharaja Jung Bahadur.

The restoration of British authority particularly in Avadh was greatly facilitated by the assistance which the Government received from Maharaja Jung Bahadur, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. The Maharaja was shown great honour by the British as can be seen from the following notification published under the authority of the Governor-General on February 3, 1858:

" The Maharaja Jung Bahadoor, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, will shortly enter the plains of Hindoostan at the head of a large force, destined to co-operate with the British

troops in the restoration of order in the British Provinces.

"The Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council directs that the Civil and Military authorities of the principal stations through which His Excellency may pass shall unite in paying to His Excellency the honour and the attention which are due to his exalted station.

"At every principal Military station, post and camp, a salute of 17 guns will be fired in honour of the Maharaja Jung Bahadur, a salute of 13 guns in honour of the Maharaja's Second in Command, General Runodeep Singh, and salutes of 11 guns each in honour of Generals Bukht Jung and Khurg Bahadoor, commanding divisions in the Nepalese force.

"The Maharaja Jung Bahadoor will be accompanied by Brigadier General Macgregor, C. B., in the capacities of Military Commissioner and Governor-General's Agent, and all Civil authorities in the districts through which the Nepalese camp may pass are hereby required to give immediate attention to all requisitions which may be addressed to them by that officer."

Loss of property.

The Court of Directors desired the Government of India to investigate the nature and extent of loss of property occasioned by the rebellion without prejudice to the decision of the Directors whether compensation for such loss shall be given or not. Accordingly the Governor-General issued certain directions to be observed throughout the North-Western Provinces.

A Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner were appointed to receive claims for compensation which were to be submitted to the Commission within three months, i.e. before August 15, 1858. A claim exceeding Rs.50,000 could first be filed with a general estimate of loss within the above date. Detailed schedules could be filed within a further period of three months. For persons residing out of India three months' grace was allowed.

Subject to the above provisions, applications were to be received from the people of the country for compensation on account of loss of property caused by their known loyalty and attachment to the British Government.*

Refusal of leave.

In order to conserve British man-power in India the Governor-General ruled that members of the Bengal Civil Service shall not be granted leave of absence during the season 1857-58 except on medical certificate. This restriction was also applied to the members of the Civil Service in the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay.

Treatment of sepoys on leave

The Governor-General also laid down rules for regulating the cases of Indian army officers and sepoys who were on leave when their regiment mutinied or was disarmed. The general rule to which some exceptions were admitted was that officers and men of the regiments which had mutinied were to be discharged on their presenting themselves for duty on the expiry of the leave. In the case of disarmed regiments the officers were allowed to join duty on the expiration of their leave.

Help to survivors

The Court of Directors expressed to the Governor-General their anxious desire that every measure of succour within the power of Government should be promptly afforded to the survivors of those who had suffered from the loss of relations and property during "the recent disturbances", especially to the widows and orphans of civil and military officers who had fallen victims to the outbreak. The Governor-General thereupon

* N. W. P. Gazette, dated May 11 1858, p. 106-B.

notified in November 1857 a set of rules for regulating the grant of assistance to sufferers in consequence of the "mutinies". These rules provided, among other things, for the grant of money to European and Indian civil and military officers who had lost their property ; for pension to the families of those officers who had been killed and who had left no means of support to their dependents ; for pension also to the destitute families of Europeans killed in the "mutinies", and for the grant of free passage to England to women and children. The rules also contained provision for the appointment of special officers to deal with the applications for relief.

Treatment of officials leaving their posts.

Certain principles were laid down for the re-appointment of officials who had left their posts during the rebellion. The basic principle was that those of the officers would be re-appointed to their original posts who had been driven from their posts by the attack of insurgents, who had gone to their homes with unblemished reputation and had subsequently displayed no treasonable or suspicious conduct.

It was further laid down that the onus of proof of good intentions in such cases shall be on the official desiring re-instatement. It was explained that no Indian official, high or low, who had disappeared during the crisis would be re-instated unless he could show to the complete satisfaction of his European superior that he had exerted himself to the utmost of his power to support the Government and to protect European life. or that his not appearing on the side of the British Government arose from circumstances beyond his control. If he could not satisfy his European officer on these points he was not to be again employed "under a Government which he has probably betrayed, and of which at best he has proved himself a cold friend."*

Forfeiture of muafis and pensions.

The Governor-General had issued instructions regarding the forfeiture of *muafis* in the villages of the Agra, Meerut and Delhi Divisions. By a subsequent order of May 1858 those instructions were made applicable for general adoption in all the divisions of the North-Western Provinces. The Sudder Board of Revenue accordingly issued instructions to all Commissioners that "a careful statement should be drawn up, as early as convenient, of the behaviour, during the late disturbances, of all *muafidars* of holdings above 10 bighas and of all persons receiving pension either political or eleemosynary." It was also directed that this important work was no longer to be delayed as it could best be done while evidence was fresh. Prompt arrangements were also to be made for the management of forfeited lands and orders issued for the resumption of forfeited pensions.

Fund in England.

A fund was raised in London for the relief of the sufferers from the revolt in India The Shah of Iran and his Prime Minister announced their intention of sending contributions to this fund. This was mentioned in a despatch of December 15, 1857, from Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran addressed to the British Foreign Office, in which he observed that this gesture on the part of the Shah and his Prime Minister would "prove a heavy blow and discouragement to the malcontent and insurrectionist Muslim party in India. It sweeps away the religious capital on which they have hitherto been trading when it proves that the chief of the great sect in the cause of which they pretend to have been fighting as champions thus openly repudiates the deeds and expresses his compassion for the victims of their atrocious

* Agra Government Gazette, dated February 2, 1858, page 49.

cruelty." The British Minister at Tehran added that it was true that other princes in Europe had set the example of becoming subscribers to the same fund, but they were friends of the British Government, whereas in the case of Iran the British had been engaged in war lately, and it was only a few weeks earlier that the British troops had left Iran.

The above despatch was acknowledged by the British Foreign Office in the following words: "Her Majesty's Government are highly gratified at this proof of friendly feeling towards England on the part of the Shah and the Sardar Azim, which they regard also as a testimony on the part of His Majesty of the righteousness of the cause in which England is engaged and that no just complaint exists on the part of the Mohammedans against this country and Government"*.

The reference in the despatch of the British Minister at Tehran to the "malcontent and insurrectionist Muslim party in India" goes to show that the revolt was not confined to disgruntled Muslim sepoys only, but was much more broad-based, and embraced the Muslims in general.

The acknowledgment sent to the despatch by the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs also lends support to this view inasmuch as it seeks to defend the proposition that Muslims had no "just complaint" against the British Government. The implication is clear that the Muslims rose against the British Government even in the absence of a "just complaint."

"One of the greatest difficulties which lie ahead—and Lord Canning grieves to say so to your Majesty—will be the violent rancour of a very large proportion of the English community against every native Indian of every class . . . . . To those whose hearts have been torn by the foul barbarities inflicted upon those dear to them any degree of bitterness against the natives may be excused. No man will dare to judge them for it. But the cry is raised loudest by those who have been sitting quietly in their homes from the beginning and have suffered little from the convulsions around them unless it be in pocket. It is to be feared that this feeling of exasperation will be a great impediment in the way of restoring tranquillity and good order, even after signal retribution shall have been deliberately meanured out to all chief offenders."—*From the letter to Queen Victoria from Viscount Canning, Governor-General, dated September 25, 1857.*

* N. W. P. Gazette, dated May 18, 1858, page 128.

ANNEXURE

RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL INDICATING THE POLICY TO BE FOLLOWED BY CIVIL OFFICERS IN THE BURNING OF VILLAGES AND OTHER MEASURES OF EXTREME SEVERITY.

The local Civil authorities had played their part in the arrest and punishment of mutineers and deserters. The Governor-General in Council issued a resolution on July 21, 1857, expressing approbation of the services of the officers in this matter. The Governor-General approved of the severe punishments awarded to such persons to show to the people "that the just fate of the mutineer is death" and that the British Government was powerful to inflict the penalty. In order, however, to prevent measures of extreme severity being too hastily resorted to or carried too far, the Governor-General issued in that resolution detailed instructions for the guidance of Civil officers in the exercise of their powers in the case of mutineers, deserters and rebels.

The following extracts from the resolution† indicate the general policy which was to be adopted by Civil officers in this matter :

"8. The Governor-General in Council is anxious to prevent measures of extreme severity being unnecessarily resorted to, or carried to excess, or applied without due discrimination, in regard to acts of rebellion committed by persons not mutineers.

"9. It is unquestionably necessary in the first attempt to restore order in a district in which the Civil authority has been entirely overthrown, to administer the law with such promptitude and severity as will strike terror into the minds of the evil disposed among the people, and will induce them by fear of death to abstain from plunder, to restore stolen property and to return to peaceful occupations. But this object once in a great degree attained, the punishment of crimes should be regulated with discrimination.

"10. The continued administration of the law in its utmost severity after the requisite impression has been made upon the rebellious and disorderly, and after order has been partially restored, would have the effect of exasperating the people, and would probably induce them to band together in large numbers for the protection of their lives, and with a view to retaliation—a result much to be deprecated. It would greatly add to the difficulties of settling the country hereafter, if a spirit of animosity against their rulers were engendered in the minds of the people, and if their feelings were embittered by the remembrance of needless bloodshed. The Civil officers in every district should endeavour, without condoning any heinous offences or making any promises of pardon for such offences, to encourage all persons to return to their usual occupations, and punishing only such of the principal offenders as can be apprehended, to postpone as far as possible all minute enquiry into political offences until such time as the Government are in a position to deal with them in strength after thorough investigation. It may be necessary, however, even after a district is partially restored to order, to make examples from time to time of such persons, if any, who may be guilty of serious outrages against person or property, or who, by stopping the dak or injuring the electric telegraph or otherwise, may endeavour to promote the designs of those who are waging war against the State.

"11. Another point to be noticed in connection with this subject is the general burning of villages, which the Governor-General in Council has reason to fear may have been carried too far by some of the Civil officers employed in restoring order.

"12. A severe measure of this sort is doubtless necessary, as an example, in some cases where the mass of the inhabitants of a village have committed a grave outrage, and the perpetrators cannot be punished in their persons; but any approach to a wholesale destruction of property by the officers of Government, without due regard to the guilt or innocence of those who are affected by it, must be strongly reprehended. Apart from the effect which such a practice would have upon the feelings and disposition of the country people, there can be no doubt that it would prevent them from returning to their villages and resuming the cultivation of their fields, a point at this season of vital importance, inasmuch as if the lands remain much longer unsown, distress and even famine may be added to the other difficulties with which the Government will have to contend."

†The resolution also contained four specific rules (not quoted in the present extracts) for dealing with mutineers or deserters arrested by the Civil power, according to the class to which the mutineer or deserter belonged with reference to his acts or omissions.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE

THE REVOLT, A PEOPLE'S UPRISING, NOT A MUTINY OF SEPOYS ALONE

"There was no doubt that the struggle in 1857 was a war of independence and a large number of Indian people rose in revolt against those who came to rule India from outside. The other thing was that all religious communities fought the foreign power together without any religious feelings being brought in."—JAWAHARLAL NEHRU *in a public address at Delhi on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of 1857.*

The "Mutiny", or the military insurrection of 1857, was accompanied by a "civil rebellion", that is to say, an uprising by the civil population side by side with the military insurrection, which is another name for mutiny by soldiers. There are two theories about the 1857 uprising : first that it was a *purely* military revolt, that is to say, mutiny by the sepoys of the Bengal Army. According to this theory the general public did not associate themselves with the rebellion. The members of the public came into the picture only to the extent that the sepoys pressed them into their service of one form or the other.

The other theory is that the uprising was not only a mutiny by the sepoys, but that side by side, and in aid of the sepoys, there was also a "civil rebellion" that is to say the members of the general public rose against British authority.

The second theory is based on the records of Government themselves, on British Parliamentary papers, despatches and memoranda of all kinds. That is now the generally accepted proposition by Indian historians with but a few dissenters. Some of the English writers also subscribe to it. The first theory finds favour with several of the English historians.

Amongst the supporters of the second theory mention may be made of Ashok Mehta (his "1857—the Great Rebellion"), Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya ('History of the Congress' in which the 1857 movement has been described as the first violent war of Indian revolution) and V. D. Savarkar ('The Indian War of Independence'). These were writers of the early part of this century. Amongst the historians of the present day, Dr. Sen has held that "it would be wrong to dismiss it as a mere military rising. The Mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the King of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the King of Delhi was the rightful representative".*

Among the dissenters Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is the most important. In his foreword to Dr. Sen's book, the Maulana Saheb, then Minister of Education in the Central Government, has written : "Some Indians have

* Dr. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty seven*, page 411.

written on the struggle in the early years of this century. If the truth is to be told we have to admit that the books they have written are not history, but mere political propaganda. These writers wanted to represent the up-rising as a planned war of independence."

The Press in England was much pleased by these observations. For instance, the *Manchester Guardian* in its issue of May 23, 1957, published an article by T. Zinkin, its representative in India, in which it was said : "Maulana Azad, the Union Minister for Education, in a foreword to a book on the mutiny, commissioned by his Government, took the opportunity to point out that the mutiny was a failure, that it was a mutiny and not the great epic many patriots would like to believe, that the leaders were selfish capitalists and feudal landlords who resented not the British, but the extent of social equality the British Raj was going to bring. Such a foreword is indeed remarkable after such a short spell of independence."

The Indian Press and the people, on the other hand, were very resentful of the views of Maulana Saheb. But this aspect apart, let us refer briefly to certain other authorities, including British writers, who consider the mutiny to be a war of independence or a national uprising to end foreign rule, and to certain circumstances pointing to that end.

The first circumstance indicating that the revolt was a widespread movement is that, even after the restoration of their authority, the British found it difficult to procure artisans and labourers for the purpose of putting up urgent Military buildings. The difficulty was so great that an Act had to be passed by which artisans and labourers were compelled to work for the erection of these buildings. The Act is No. VI of 1858 and it authorised the impressment of artisans and labourers for the erection of Military buildings for European troops. This shows that the general public, even at the level of labourers, had no sympathies with the British Government.

Another point is that in the various enactments passed by the Legislative Council of India in 1858 for dealing with matters arising out of the rebellion, the words used in the preamble of the enactments were "recent disturbances in the North-Western Provinces and other parts of India", or "recent disturbances." This means that there were *general disturbances* amongst the population. If the idea was to convey that the disturbance was confined only to sepoys, the proper word to be used would have been "mutiny" which signifies revolt of troops only and has no concern with civil disturbance or with mass uprising (*Cf.* Act no. V of 1858, providing for punishment of offenders escaping from jails. *See* also Act XIX of 1858—an Act to provide for the authentication of stamp paper issued from the Stamp Office in Calcutta in which also the words "recent disturbances" have been used).

With a notification dated April 30, 1858, was published for general information a letter from the Government of the North-Western Provinces to the Commissioner of Rohilkhand. The letter contained the principles indicated by the Governor-General for officers exercising magisterial powers in Rohilkhand on the re-entry of British troops in that Province. It contained the following significant words :

" The condition of Rohilkhand has been in some respects peculiar. *The progress of the revolt in the interior has until lately suffered little check. . .* ".

From these observations, it is clear that the uprising, at any rate in Rohilkhand, was a general one and not confined to the sepoys alone.

The letter further laid down that in cases involving acts of treason against the State or a deliberate defiance of authority, criminal proceedings should be taken only against the leaders. Further that prosecutions

should also be started against persons whether high or low who have indulged in persistent rancour against Government or have persisted in opposition to Government's authority after re-occupation of stations. This too points to the fact that there was a general defiance of British authority by people high and low alike and that the measures suggested had application to the general population as distinguished from mutinous sepoys against whom action was to be taken in accordance with other provisions.

An Act (Act X of 1858) was passed by the Legislative Council of India in March, 1858, authorising the confiscation of villages, the imposition of fines and the forfeiture of offices in cases of rebellion and other crimes committed by inhabitants of villages. It also provided for the punishment of proprietors of land who neglected to assist in the suppression of the rebellion or in the apprehension of rebels, mutineers or deserters. The passing of this Act is proof of the fact that the revolt was wide-spread and covered almost the entire population of the North-Western Provinces. There were several other enactments of the Governor-General in Council which also establish the same proposition. Their substance has been given in the previous chapter.

Most of the leaders of the revolt had nothing to do with the Company's army—nor were they professional soldiers. Nana Saheb, Tatya Tope, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah, Kunwar Singh, Begum Hazrat Mahal, Prince Firoz Shah, Rana Beni Madhav Singh, Maulvi Liaqat Ali, the Raos of Karvi, are some examples, to say nothing of the Emperor Bahadur Shah, the Nawabs of Banda and Farrukhabad.

So was the case with the Jat leader of Baraut (Meerut), Shahamal, who had 4,000 Jat followers, who fell fighting* and whose head was exhibited to induce the people to return to normal activities.

Similarly at Kanpur, Nana Saheb had with him a much larger number of zamindars and their followers than the number of sepoys who had mutinied.

Though the mutinous sepoys formed the nucleus of the nationalist army, it was greatly supplemented by a mass of new recruits. These came from every section of the population and from every community. During the course of the war, the British at one time said that it was a Muslim movement, at another that it was a Hindu bid for supremacy. This was entirely untrue because at all stages both communities were well represented in the nationalist army; the Rani of Jhansi had her Afghan guards, Nana Saheb had his Azimullah Khan, the Nawab of Farrukhabad had his Thakur Pande (popularly known as Collector Thakur Pande) and, for Bahadur Shah, Sikhs fought against the British in the siege of Delhi. Vilayatis or Afghans predominated in the nationalist force at Dhar and Mandisore. Even some stray English soldiers were on the side of Indian leaders, and fought and died for India.†

The war in Avadh has been acknowledged by almost all historians, including the British, as a war of independence and not a mere mutiny. The whole province joined in the revolt and the civil population supported Queen Hazrat Mahal. Even Lord Canning, the Governor-General, candidly admitted that the struggle in Avadh was "in a real sense a national up-rising." So also "the movement in Shahabad (Bihar) had all the dignity of a national revolt and was supported by many of the minor zamindars and more or less openly by all the Rajput population

* Shahamal was struck by a bullet, yet he could not be over-powered. He was then cut by the sword. Writes A. Tunnochy: "I gave him the second shot which went through him, having entered his back, upon which he at once dropped, but recovering himself in a moment......he wounded me in two places........ I then had time to draw my sword and gave him a gashing wound in the neck"--Dr. Chaudhuri, page 65.

†For particulars, see Appendix D, Section II, entitled "Rebel Europeans."

of the district"—this is what a British officer wrote to another on September 25, 1858. It is also on record that after the restoration of British authority whenever the police went to arrest the rebels in the villages of Shahabad, the people drove out the policemen.**

Writing in 1922, Prof. A. B. Keith says : "The Mutiny of the Bengal Army in 1857, *supported by elements of the civil population*, proved that the Company's administration, despite its merits, had failed to keep in effective touch with Indian opinion."†

During the course of the rebellion Mr. Ernest Jones, a noted labour leader of the time, declared that "the revolt in India was not a military mutiny, but a national insurrection."

Then we have the evidence of the famous Irish historian, Justice MacCarthy, who writes : "It was not alone the sepoy who rose in revolt—it was not by any means a merely military mutiny, it was a combination of a military grievance, national hatred and religious fanaticism against the English of India. The Meerut sepoys found in a moment a leader, a flag and a cause, and the mutiny was transformed into a revolutionary war."

In a broadcast message to the nation on the occasion of the centenary of 1857, President Rajendra Prasad said that the movement of 1857 was "the most determined and widespread of the risings" which had taken place till then against the East India Company. "There is little wonder, therefore, if writers and historians have described this movement as a national war of independence", said the President. He also expressed the view that, by whatever name the movement may be described, it was not purely accidental—the people of India as a whole had never accepted the rule of the East India Company with alacrity.

Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru *in his Discovery of India* writes : "It was much more than a military mutiny ; it spread rapidly and assumed the character of a popular rebellion and a war of Indian Independence". Again, in a public address at Delhi on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of 1857, he observed that the struggle of that year affected the minds and hearts of millions of common people and became in their minds a struggle against British rule. "Clearly, it was the manifestation of the anger of the people against the British. It was also the manifestation of an effort to throw out the British from India", added the Prime Minister.

Valuable light on this controversy has been thrown by Dr. S. B. Chaudhuri of the West Bengal Educational Service in his *Civil Rebellion in the Mutinies*, 1857—59. In it, the author has supported the view that the events of 1857 were not merely a military insurrection as is sometimes believed, but that it was a general uprising of the whole people against British rule. In support of this view, the author has given reference to authoritative texts, events and circumstances which go to show the nature of the rising and the part played by the general population in it. The book is said to be a pioneer work on a neglected aspect of the revolt of 1857, namely the aspect concerning the part played by the civil population in the uprising.

Dr. Chaudhuri observes that the two aspects of the uprising of 1857 are quite distinct and well-marked, so that a separate treatment of the "civilian rebellion" is not only feasible but desirable. He has accordingly presented this aspect of the matter in his book.

In his foreword, Dr. Radhakrishnan has come to the conclusion that, after reading Dr. Chaudhuri's book, he is left with the impression that the mutiny was accompanied

** Dr. Sen, page 264.

†*Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, volume I. page XXIV of the Preface.

by an uprising of the civil population as well. This is what he writes : ". . . I have felt impressed by the attention he (the author) devotes to the various forces and factors of discontent that lay outside the orbit of the immediate causes of the so-called Sepoy War. To this aspect of the problem some attention was necessary. Dr. Chaudhuri's two books provide the answer. His conclusion that the movement expressed a profound desire for freedom on the part of the people of India and that it was not merely a feudal movement, but had within it the germs of progress, seems to be fully sustainable."

The following are the further observations of Dr. Radhakrishnan : "The death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 hastened the disintegration of the Moghal Empire. The Rajputs, the Sikhs and later the Marathas resisted the Moghal rule. In many parts the people could not bear either their vices or the remedies for them. Several European powers came in for purposes of trade and after the battle of Plassey in 1757 the British established themselves as the paramount power in the country. . . . .There was a general belief among many Indians that the Company's rule would come to an end, as it did 100 years after the battle of Plassey in 1757. The two years 1857--1859 were characterised by chaos, terror and violence. . . . The magnificent feats of heroism and the valour of the Rani of Jhansi, Queen Hazrat Mahal, Nana Saheb, Tatya Tope, Bahadur Shah and his Queen Zinat Mahal, Kunwar Singh and many others do honour to human nature and its love for freedom. Their deeds are celebrated in song and story. The uprising was a great political event which left a deep mark on the minds and hearts of the Indian people. . . . . It may be true to say that the year 1857 marked the beginning of a new era which ended in the transfer of power in 1947. . . . . If the resistance was suppressed it was not only because of the superior technical power and discipline of the British, it was also because of the defective and divided leadership, of personal jealousies and intrigues on the Indian side."

The learned philosopher and statesman goes on to add that "communal differences were not pronounced and princes, landlords and sepoys fought on both sides. . . . . The one lesson which our past history gives us is that the country has not been conquered from without, it has often been defeated from within. Religious differences, regional differences, social differences, economic differences, have often stood in the way of our unity. . . Freedom is not fulfilment. The country is not an old curiosity shop of ancient monuments, nor can dams, hydro-electric projects and tractors, essential as they are for feeding our millions, make people great. Governments come and go and nations change and lose their faces."

Sir Henry Lawrence, essentially a friend of the natives, thought Europeans too apt to overvalue themselves and their own Government and to undervalue the native Government of the country. He thought, too, that the people had just cause for complaint, and that affection is a feeling we have no right to challenge from our native subjects in India . . . . . Aliens as we are from them in blood, in feeling, in religion; nowise mingling with them in social intercourse, and interchanging few kindly offices, we have no right to expect from them love and sympathy [illegible] assistance and support.—MARTIN GUBBINS in *Mutinies in Oudh.*

CHAPTER FORTY

CAUSES OF FAILURE

BRITAIN'S SEA POWER

SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT ; LONG-RANGE GUNS

TELEGRAPH AND RAILWAYS

LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND CO-ORDINATION

WANT OF NATIONALISM

"How far high failure overleaps
the bounds of low successes."

SEA-POWER

"The defeat of many Brathwaites and Ballies will not destroy them (the English). I can ruin their resources by land, but I cannot dry up the sea,"*—so said Haider Ali when dying. He had won victories over the Generals named, but he knew that this availed little because of the strength of Britain's sea-power. If this was true during the time of Haider Ali (died 1782), it was true with greater emphasis at the time of the rebellion for within a few weeks of the news of the outbreak reaching England, 30,000 troops sailed for India.

The British, after the initial shocks and failures, were thus sustained by the hope of receiving re-inforcements from home. Their defeat, therefore, did not demoralise them as happened in the case of Indians—the latter's defeats brought them only despair, because they were left with little hope of succour and of retrieving their position. Nevertheless, it must be said that they fought on in spite of the odds against them and their many handicaps. Many of the leaders were too brave and honourable to think of surrender even in their extremities, the case of Rana Beni Madhav Singh being a striking example.

The British Navy also assisted the land forces. Amongst the notable services rendered by the Navy, mention may be made of Captain William Peel, who, in command of H. M. S. Shannon, was proceeding to China. This Captain Peel was the third son of Sir Robert Peel, for some time the Prime Minister of England. He was diverted to India to fight the rebellion and soon formed his Naval Brigade of some 500 men and marched to the front with his battery of heavy guns. He had earlier won the Victoria Cross in the Crimean War. He brought to bear his qualities of leadership in many a battle with the Indian forces in the initial stages of the struggle. He was with General Havelock in the march to Kanpur and the success of the British in the various battles of Kanpur was due to the efficacy of Captain Peel's brigade. He was severely wounded in the final assault on Lucknow and died shortly afterwards of small-pox when he had begun to recover from his wound.

*Colonel Wilk's *History of Mysore*. He was Resident at Mysore from 1803 to 1808.

SUPERIOR EQUIPMENT, LONG-RANGE GUNS

The British artillery, with long-range guns and adept artillery-men to man them, was a most effective weapon in the hands of the British. It was through these guns that the English generals were able, with small forces, to repel large numbers on the rebel side. It was with the aid of their superior artillery that forty years previously, the British had been able to rout Peshwa Baji Rao II in 1818, and it was the same weapon which saved them in 1857. The celebrated historian of the Maratha period, Vishwanath Rajwade, writes : "If any of the Maratha troopers accompanying the Peshwa Baji Rao II in his flight before the British regiments of General Smith and others during the early months of 1818 were asked why he ran away and what particular fright had seized him, he would have unhesitatingly answered that he was not at all afraid of the white biped, but of the powerful long-range guns which he handled and the superior scientific equipment that he possessed in the art of conducting war".

In other military equipment also, the British were far superior to the insurgents. Thus, the sepoys used the old type of muzzle-loading guns which were excelled by the newly invented breech-loaders of the English troops.

THE TELEGRAPH AND THE RAILWAYS

The electric telegraph and the railways were the other advantages on the British side which greatly assisted them in planning and co-ordinating their military actions. Through the use of the telegraph and the post, British commanders obtained valuable information which enabled them to adjust their plans to the quick-changing situations. "It is that accursed string that strangles us", were the words uttered by a condemned sepoy when he was being led for execution—so saying he had pointed to the telegraph poles and wires.

Then again, Sir W. W. Hunter in *Rulers of India Series* (Clarendon Press, 1905) has observed that "the railway and the telegraph were worth thousands of men to us in the mutiny of 1857 and it is by the railway and telegraph that India is now strategically held."

The telegraph enabled the Commander-in-Chief to receive at his break-fast table the latest news from the Government of India; it also enabled the Governor-General at Calcutta, and later at Allahabad, to receive at dinner time reports of the day's battles fought hundreds of miles away.

LACK OF LEADERSHIP AND CO-ORDINATION

Amongst the rebels there were no doubt leaders of calibre and distinction, but they were too few for the needs of the vast number of sepoys and others who had taken up arms. There was also the greater handicap of the lack of a powerful central authority to direct the course of war on the part of the Indians who fought stray actions in an uncoordinated manner. On the British side, on the other hand, there was the forceful central leadership of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief with a band of experienced generals who had been fighting in and out of India, which the leaders of the sepoys had not.

There was also lack of coordination in Indian ranks. Each one of the leaders was looking to his own affairs, his own victory, his own safety. Of course, the principle was not forgotten that individual safety lay in the strength of all, in the capacity of the whole country as represented by the totality of the strength of individual leaders, but perhaps things were beyond their control. In proportion to the weakness of Indians in this respect, the strength of the British lay in their powers of co-ordination and planning.

As a result of this superiority, the British were able to concentrate their energies according to the needs of the different theatres of the conflict. As a classic example may

be mentioned the action of General Wheeler, who though himself in imminent danger at Kanpur, sent a part of his meagre European troops to Lucknow where, he thought, the position was more serious.* This reminds us of the ennobling example of Sir Phillip Sydney who, when lay dying on the field of Zutphen, waived from himself the cup of cold water that was offered to him, with the words :

"GIVE IT TO THAT POOR MAN: HIS NECESSITY IS GREATER THAN MINE."

WANT OF NATIONALISM

Another cause of failure in the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was "a lack of national feeling which might have bound the people of India together." "The feudal chiefs had the sympathy of the masses over large areas, but they were incapable, unorganised and with no constructive ideal or community of interest. They had already played their role in history and there was no place for them in future. Many of their number, in spite of their sympathies, thought discretion the better part of valour, and stood apart waiting to see on which side the victory lay. Many played the part of Quislings. The Indian Princes as a whole kept aloof, or helped the British, fearing to risk what they had acquired or managed to retain. There was hardly any national and unifying sentiment among the leaders and a mere anti-foreign feeling, coupled with a desire to maintain their feudal privileges, was a poor substitute for this".†

With the exception of a few chiefs, such as the Rani of Jhansi, the Begum of Avadh, the English were able to count on the loyalty of most of the Indian rulers and their ministers. Thus, Sir Dinker Rao, the Dewan of Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior, and Sir Salar Jung, the Dewan of Hyderabad, not only held themselves aloof from the rebels, but also assisted the Company in many ways. There was then Maharaja Jang Bahadur, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, who marched with his Gurkhas to help the British Commander-in-Chief in the relief of Lucknow. Finally, there were the Sikh soldiers who remained loyal and fought along with the British troops.

'The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.'

*Writing to the Governor-General about this, Sir Hugh Wheeler said: "This leaves me weak, but I trust to hold my own until more Europeans arrive."

†The Discovery of India, page 269.

"As to the question of Ajam and its men of eminence, be assured that were you to destroy these, you could never alter the climate that bred them, so that others of the same description will necessarily rise in their place. Endeavour, therefore, to enslave them by obligations, and you will render them sincere in their adherence, nay, the most submissive of all your vassals."

When Alexander was trying to conquer the country of Ajam, he found it abounding in persons of intellect and talent, with men of eminence and bravery, whom it seemed as prejudicial to the safety of his empire to spare, as it was repugnant to the principles of equity to exterminate. In his perplexity, Alexander wrote a letter seeking the advice of Aristotle, his preceptor and minister. It is the great philosopher's reply which has been quoted.

PART THREE

THE CONSEQUENCES

(Chapters 41 to 51)

"If for good thou bearest pain, the pain endureth not, the good endureth; if for evil thou enjoyest pleasure, the pleasure endureth not, the evil endureth." *Aristotle.*

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE

END OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY; THE QUEEN'S PROCLAMATION.

A. ENGLISH PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE COMPANY.

AN ACT FOR THE BETTER GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

RESOLUTION OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE COMPANY.

B. QUEEN VICTORIA'S PROCLAMATION.

C. EFFECT OF TRANSFER TO THE CROWN.

To everything there is an end, and to the regime of the East India Company also, there was now an end.

A. ENGLISH PUBLIC OPINION AGAINST THE COMPANY

Even prior to the mutiny, public opinion in England had gradually grown against the East India Company. In the first place, the Company's administration was far below the standards which enlightened public men of England would have wished to be followed. In their opinion there was much mal-administration in Indian affairs, which had caused just discontent amongst the Indians themselves. The feelings of sober Englishmen about the Company's Indian Government were effectively voiced in the following terms by John Malcolm Ludlow :

" The present system of Indian Government .... has failed in practice in every-one of the requisites of good government. It has failed to give security to person or property throughout by far the greater portion of India : sometimes by leaving the subject exposed to the open violence of brigands, always by placing him at the mercy of oppressive and fraudulent officials.

" The judicial system is dilatory, costly and inefficient.

" The revenue system.... seems devised in its different branches so as to promote the largest possible amount of oppression, extortion and immorality.

" As a matter of fact, the population are, in most parts of the country, sinking alike in physical condition and in moral character.

" Many of the above-mentioned evils are of British introduction ; others have been aggravated under British rule.

* * *

" A wholly new vice—drunkenness—has been introduced among the Hindu population, is largely spreading and is fostered by the exigencies of the public revenue"*

Another reason why the average Englishman in England was against the East India Company lay in the fact that the Directors of the Company held almost virtual monopolies

* *British India, its Races and its History*, Vol I. pp. 335—37.

every rank "for the fidelity, zeal and efficiency with which they have performed their several duties, and offers to them its best wishes for their future prosperity". Their past services were eulogised by saying that the Crown would possess no servants abler, none more devoted, than those who had been trained by the Company. The resolution expressed the trust that it may be recorded in the pages of impartial history that the members of its civil and military services showed the highest qualities of the statesman and the soldier.

Finally, the resolution referred to the good which the Company's Government had brought to India and prayed the Almighty that the Queen's Indian reign be blessed by the speedy restoration of peace, security and order and prosper Her Majesty's efforts for the welfare of the millions of Her Majesty's Indian subjects.

The Directors forwarded an extract from this resolution to the Governor-General in Council for promulgation in a suitable manner. The Governor-General had the extract published in the Gazette of India with the addition of his own observations in which he said that the Company's parting words of good-will and approval would be received with respectful thankfulness by the vast community of Indian civil and military services. The Governor-General added that amongst all the servants there was but one feeling of acknowledgment of the just, considerate and liberal treatment which had ever characterised the Great Company which had now ceased to govern the British territories in India.*

B. QUEEN VICTORIA'S PROCLAMATION

After the passing of this Act a day was appointed on which the proclamation of the Queen of England taking over the administration of India was to be read to the people of India at important cities and military establishments. The day fixed by the Governor-General was November 1, 1858, and a Gazette notification announcing the coming event also directed that all public offices in India were to be closed on that day and the day following.

The Queen's proclamation to the Princes, Chiefs and people of India was publicly read in English and in Hindustani on the glacis of the Allahabad Fort on Monday, November 1, 1858. There were present to hear the proclamation, the Civil and Military officers, all European residents of the station and the inhabitants of the city. The English and the Indian troops garrisoning the Fort were also present.

Lord Canning, who was now to become the Viceroy and Governor-General, arrived on the spot at 5 p m. The Commander-in-Chief also came with him. On their arrival the troops presented arms.

The Secretary to the Government of India with the Governor-General then read the proclamation first in English and then in Hindustani. Thereafter a Royal salute was fired from the ramparts of the Fort and the troops presented arms.

In the same evening there was an exhibition of fire works. On the following night there was a general illumination of the station and city of Allahabad and the Khusroo Bagh.†

No special circumstance attended the reading of the proclamation at Kanpur. There was a parade and "a sufficient but no remarkable collection" of Indians. The document was read by Mr. Batten, the Judge, who happened

* Gazette of India, dated November 8, 1858.

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to be the senior civilian at the station. He read it out from a carriage.

Just a day prior to the issue of the proclamation an unfortunate incident, in which two persons were killed in tragic circumstances, took place. A Rajput chieftain, by name Gulab Singh, who had taken part in the fighting at Kanpur and had later fled across the Yamuna, came over to his home in the Kanpur district on the morning of October 31, after having read that the proclamation was going to be issued the next day. On coming to know of this a thanedar, who was rather hot-headed, went to arrest him, an act which was not really justified. The police surrounded his house, but the constables did not dare to face the old Rajput who was sitting on a charpai. Thereupon, the thanedar himself rushed into the house with a drawn sword in his hand. No sooner did he approach him than Gulab Singh shot him with a revolver. Before the thanedar, who was mortally wounded, fell down, he succeeded in slaying Gulab Singh ; both fell dead in the court-yard of the house. Mr. Sherer, the Magistrate of Kanpur, was eventually touched by this tragedy, and as a trophy later bought Gulab Singh's revolver at a public auction at a cost of Rs.40.*

In her proclamation the Queen announced that she had taken over the Government of India, and called upon all Indians, who had in consequence become her subjects, to bear allegiance to the Crown of England and to submit themselves to the authority of those whom the Crown may appoint to administer the affairs of India. She went on to say that she had appointed Lord Canning, the Governor-General of the East India Company, to be her first Viceroy and Governor-General. She also confirmed, in their respective appointments, all civil and military personnel who had been in the service of the Company. She undertook to abide by all the treaties made with Indian Princes by the Company. The Princes were assured that the Crown desired no extension of its territorial possessions in India and that the rights, dignity and honour of Indian Princes shall be respected.

The Queen declared herself bound to her Indian subjects by the same obligations of duty which bound her to her subjects residing in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, which obligations the Queen undertook faithfully and conscientiously to fulfil. She disclaimed any desire to interfere with the religious feelings and observances of the Indian people in the following graceful words:

> " Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure".

The proclamation also announced that Indians would be freely and impartially admitted to offices in the service of the Government of India. The Queen also announced that generally in framing and administering the law, due regard shall be paid to the ancient rights, usages and customs of India.

Referring to the rebellion, the Queen deeply lamented the evils and the misery which it had brought upon India. She then observed that the power of the British had been shown

* *Havelock's March on Kanpur*, pages 316-318.

over every sphere of administration economic as well as political. The people of England, through their Parliament, had practically no say in the affairs of India. Of all these monopolies the one which caused most bitterness to the general population of England was the monopoly of the Company over public appointments in India. This monopoly enabled the authorities of the Company to send out military and civil officers to India out of their own family circles or from amongst their friends and adherents.

Sir Charles (afterwards Lord) Metcalfe had also written that it would be better for India if her government were transferred from the Company to the Crown. He said :

" Although it seems to be a matter of indifference to the native population whether India be governed through the Company, or directly by the Ministers of the Crown, it is not so to another class of subjects.

" The Europeans settled in India, and not in the Company's service, and to these might be added generally the East Indians of mixed breed, will never be satisfied with the Company's government. Well or ill founded, they will aways attach to it the notion of monopoly and exclusion. For the contentment of this class, which, for the benefit of India and the security of our Indian Empire, ought greatly to increase in numbers and importance, the introduction of a King's government is undoubtedly desirable.

" A King's government is also the one which is most likely to be permanent, as the Company's hold under a Charter must be liable to periodical changes and reversions, whether for renewal or subversion."*

For these reasons there had been one or two earlier attempts in the British Parliament to oust the Company from the sovereignty of India and to take over the Government directly in the hands of Parliament in the name of the British Crown, as was the case in the administration of England itself. However, due to the efforts of influential personalities behind the East India Company, those attempts bore no fruit.

AN ACT FOR THE BETTER GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

On the occurrence of the revolt, the question was revived in all seriousness and the pressure of strong public opinion caused the British Cabinet to introduce in Parliament a Bill for the transfer of Indian affairs from the hands of the Company to those of Parliament through the Crown. This Bill was meant to replace an earlier Act which had been passed by Parliament and by which the East India Company were allowed to continue to administer its Indian territories *in trust* for Her Majesty until Parliament should otherwise provide. Under that Act the Company held all property and rights in India in trust for Her Majesty.

While this Bill was pending before Parliament, the Directors of the Company submitted an elaborate petition protesting against the Bill on the ground that the Company had secured numerous advantages to the people of India as well as to the people of England by their sound administration and had created an Indian Empire for the British people. But this petition failed to influence either the British Cabinet or Parliament; so also failed the other efforts of the Directors to prevent the transfer. The Bill† was duly passed into "An Act for the better government of India" on August 2, 1858.

The main features of this Act were :

(a) The East India Company was divested of all control over the affairs of India: this control now became vested in Her Majesty, and was to be exercised

*Kaye's *Selections from Metcalfe's Papers*

† The Bill was introduced during the Prime Ministership of Lord Palmerston and was finally passed when Lord Derby was the Prime Minister

in her name by the authorities named in the Act. All British territories in India were now held in the name of Her Majesty ; so also all property, movable and immovable, previously belonging to the Company and situated in India. India was to be governed henceforth by, and in the name of, the British Crown.

(*b*) The Crown was to administer India through a member of the British Cabinet who was designated as the Secretary of State for India, to be assisted by a Committee called the Council of India. The two together were known by the name of the Secretary of State for India in Council. This body was now invested with all the powers which were previously exercised by the East India Company through the Court of Directors, the Board of Control or other Committees of the Company. In other words, the Secretary of State in Council was the immediate agent of Parliament for the discharge of its responsibilities in Indian affairs.

(*c*) The Council of India was to consist of 15 members to be chosen in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The duties of the Council were to conduct, under the direction of the Secretary of State, the business transacted in the United Kingdom in relation to the Government of India and the correspondence with India. At the meetings of the Council the view of the Secretary of State was to prevail except in specified classes of cases which the Act required to be decided by a majority of votes. All orders and communications sent to India were to be signed by the Secretary of State and so also every other order or document meant for use in the United Kingdom. In like manner all communications from India were to be addressed to the Secretary of State instead of, as was formerly the case, to the Court of Directors or the Secret Committee of that Court.

(*d*) The Act contained subsidiary provisions about appointments to public services in India and the authorities by which such appointments were to be made. Provision was also made for the disposal of the stock of the Company and the payment of dividends thereon.

(*e*) The officers and servants of the Company now became the officers and servants of Her Majesty.

(*f*) All treaties made by the Company were declared as binding on Her Majesty and all liabilities arising on contracts or otherwise of the Company were taken over by Her Majesty.

(*g*) Finally, provision was made for the proclamation of the Act in India as soon as possible after a copy of the Act had been received by the Governor-General of India. Pending such proclamation, things done in India in the name of the East India Company were to be entirely valid and effectual.

RESOLUTION OF THE COURT OF DIRECTORS

After the Act had been passed on August 2, 1858, the Directors of the Company reconciled themselves to their great loss. And, as is characteristic of Englishmen, they did so with grace and good feelings. If a comparison were to be made, the instance can be cited of the good grace and the decorous manner in which, after the decision that India should become independent, the British transferred power to Indian hands in 1947.

A special and last meeting of the *General* Court of the Company was held on August 30, 1858, in which a resolution on the severance of the connection of the Company with the Government of India was unanimously passed. It recorded the warmest thanks of the Company to its servants and officers of

every rank "for the fidelity, zeal and efficiency with which they have performed their several duties, and offers to them its best wishes for their future prosperity". Their past services were eulogised by saying that the Crown would possess no servants abler, none more devoted, than those who had been trained by the Company. The resolution expressed the trust that it may be recorded in the pages of impartial history that the members of its civil and military services showed the highest qualities of the statesman and the soldier.

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> "Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure".

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Referring to the rebellion, the Queen deeply lamented the evils and the misery which it had brought upon India. She then observed that the power of the British had been shown

* *Havelock's March on Kanpur*, pages 316–318.

by the suppression of the revolt and she now desired to show her mercy by pardoning the offences of those who had taken up arms against the Company, but who now desired "to return to the path of duty". She confirmed the promises of pardon made by Lord Canning in respect of the people of Avadh in his proclamation of March 15, 1858, and made a further declaration that :

" Our clemency will be extended to all offenders, save and except those who had been or shall be convicted of having directly taken part in the murder of British subjects, with regard to such the demands of justice forbid the exercise of mercy".

She then went on to add :

" To those who have willingly given asylum to murderers, knowing them to be such, or who may have acted as leaders or instigators of revolt, their lives alone can be guaranteed ; but in apportioning the penalty due to such persons, full consideration will be given to the circumstances under which they have been induced to throw off their allegiance; and large indulgence will be shown to those whose crimes may appear to have originated in the credulous acceptance of the false reports circulated by designing men".

As regards all others in arms against the Government, the Queen promised unconditional pardon, amnesty and oblivion of all offences on their return to their homes and peaceful pursuits. It was laid down that these terms would be extended to all those who complied with the conditions before January 1859.

The proclamation concluded with lofty sentiments couched in graceful language, part of which were the Queen's own words inserted by her in the draft which had been submitted for Royal approval :

" When, by the blessing of Providence, internal tranquillity shall be restored, it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India, to promote works of public utility and improvement, and to administer the government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein. In their prosperity will be our strength, in their contentment our security, and in their gratitude our best reward. And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people".

Queen's Interest in the drafting of the Proclamation.

The proclamation when first drafted by a Cabinet Minister was not acceptable to the Queen at several places. It contained certain passages which had the ill-taste to allude to the Government's power to undermine Indian religion and customs. The Queen was offended at this threat. and it is on record that Her Majesty objected to the clause which declared that she had the power of undermining Indian religion. The Queen suggested that this subject should be introduced in the declaration in the sense of deep attachment which Her Majesty feels in her own religion and that the comfort and solace which it provides will preclude her from any interference with the Indian religions and also that her servants will be directed to act scrupulously in accordance with her directions.

With these specific suggestions, the Queen had the whole proclamation re-written by Lord Derby to whom Her Majesty's desire was conveyed in these words : "The Queen would be glad if Lord Derby would write it himself in his excellent language bearing in mind that it is a female Sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct government over them after a bloody civil war, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem and explaining the principles of her government. Such a document should breathe feelings of generosity, benevolence and religious toleration and point out the

privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on an equality with the subjects of the British Crown, and the prosperity following the train of civilisation".

Lord Derby wrote out the proclamation entirely in the spirit of Her Majesty's desire. The Queen was satisfied. But she still felt that a proper finishing touch was lacking in the draft. And she added the following words as the last sentence : "And may the God of all power grant to us, and to those in authority under us, strength to carry out these our wishes for the good of our people".

Reading of the Proclamation at other places

The proclamation was translated into every language and dialect of India and read ceremoniously in the great centres of population and at every civil and military station in British India. At the same time, Lord Canning himself also issued a proclamation calling upon all the subjects of Her Majesty to give their loyal obedience to the British Sovereign.

The European population of India testified their enthusiasm by holding religious services, military salutes, concerts, displays of buntings, banquets, illuminations and fire-works. Thousands of Indians also signed loyal addresses to the new Government. In order to make the influence of the proclamation fully effective, Lord Canning undertook extensive tours of the country. During these tours, he received the Princes in darbars and rewarded those whose 'loyalty' during the revolution had been conspicuous.

Legal Implications of the Proclamation

It is to be noted, however, that noble and philanthropic sentiments incorporated as they were in the proclamation, the document itself was not a treaty and it did not impose any legal responsibility or obligation on the part of the British Government to fulfil the promises contained in it. An eminent English jurist—Sir James Stephen—went to the extent of characterising the proclamation as "merely a ceremonial document".

C. EFFECT OF TRANSFER TO THE CROWN

The transfer of power from the Company to the Crown had a far-reaching effect on the princely order. The office of Viceroy came into being in order to facilitate dealings with Indian Princes who were put in direct relationship with the British Crown through the Viceroy who acted as the Crown representative in India. All matters connected with Indian Princes and their states were dealt with in a separate department under the direct charge of the Viceroy himself.

Contrary to the policy which was being followed during the administration of the East India Company, certain rights and privileges of Indian Princes were specifically recognised. Lord Dalhousie's "Doctrine of Lapse" was abrogated—under it a ruler of an Indian state without a male issue could not adopt an heir to succeed to his *gaddi* without the permission of the British Government which was rarely given, and as a result of which the territories of many rulers were incorporated in the British dominions. The Queen's proclamation had specifically made the point that the British Government had now no intention of extending its dominions and it was in fulfilment of that promise that the right of an Indian ruler, without male issue, to adopt an heir to succeed to the *gaddi* was recognised. Certain other privileges of lesser importance were similarly recognised.

The revolt in India, though it had greatly weakened, was still alive particularly in the province of Avadh, when the British Parliament passed the Act for the transfer of Indian administration to the Crown. That by itself did not have much effect in liquidating the revolt. So, the Queen's proclamation, which was a most diplomatic move on the part of the British Cabinet, came to fulfil the real purpose. It was calculated to

smoothen the rebellious feelings of the Indian people and to reconcile them to the rule of England. And in achieving this object the proclamation succeeded admirably.

The revolt was thus of advantage to the British nation in that it brought about the transference of the Indian dominion from the hands of a small body of men to the control of the British people as a whole through their Parliament. Avenues of employment were thrown open to the general public of England. Previously, such appointments were the monopoly of certain families of selected people who had a hand in the East India Company or who were associated with it. These appointments, particularly in the Indian Army, were of special value to the British public as a whole.

The events of the rebellion had also produced a certain amount of sobriety amongst the British officers, both civil and military, and they took the lesson that merely dependence on brute force was no solution of the Indian problem nor could India be held long under British bayonets. This had a steadying influence on the future administration of the country.

To the Indians also, the rebellion was not without its fruits. Though for a time it seemed that the people had been laid low, but actually the stories of atrocities committed by the British generally roused some sort of nationalist feelings amongst the people and they began to think in terms of self-government.

It was the nationalist impact created by the revolt which was the seed of subsequent movements launched for Indian self-government. This seed grew in different and, at times, opposing directions. For instance, it gave rise on the one hand to the terrorist movement, particularly in Bengal, and on the other it produced a body of eminent public men who believed in constitutional agitation to attain Swaraj. There were others who were aggressive in their agitation, but who did not advocate terrorism as a means of attaining their goal. The sober elements in the country realized that power could not be wrenched from the British through force of arms and that other methods must be pursued. The Non-cooperation and the Civil Disobedience movements of Mahatma Gandhi were, so to say, the lessons of the rebellion.

It is true that the revolt was effectual in consolidating British power in India, but at the same time it was also the starting point towards Independence which eventually materialized in 1947.

"The Queen acknowledges the receipt of Lord Canning's letter of the 19th October, which she received on the 29th November, which has given her great pleasure.

It is a source of great satisfaction and pride to her to feel herself in direct communication with that enormous Empire which is so bright a jewel of her Crown, and which she would wish to see happy, contented, and peaceful. May the publication of her proclamation be the beginning of a new era, and may it draw a veil over the sad and bloody past!

The Queen rejoices to hear that her Viceroy approves this passage about religion. She strongly insisted on it . . .

The Queen must express our admiration of Lord Canning's own Proclamation, the wording of which is beautiful. The telegram received to-day brings continued good news, and announces her proclamation having been read, and having produced a good effect."—*From Queen Victoria to Viscount Canning, dated December 2, 1858.*

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

THE LAST DAYS OF NANA SAHEB.

A. REWARD FOR HIS ARREST.

B. GENERAL BELIEF ABOUT HIS DEATH IN NEPAL.

C. HIS PROCLAMATION AND ISHTIHARNAMA ; NEGOTIATIONS FOR SURRENDER.

D. NANA SAHEB AND THE NEPAL DARBAR.

E. DID HE TAKE REFUGE IN MACCA OR TURKEY ?

F. A CLAIMANT TO THE NANA ; THE NANA SAHEB MEMORIAL.

ANNEXURE : LETTER TO G. WARD PRICE AND HIS REPLY.

"Not only the wisdom of centuries but also their madness breaketh out in us. Dangerous it is to be an heir."

—NIETZSCHE.

A. REWARD FOR NANA SAHEB'S ARREST

The following announcement of the Governor-General in Council appeared in the Gazette of India, dated August 19, 1857, and republished in the Agra Government Gazette, dated October 6, 1857 :

"It is hereby notified that the Governor-General of India in Council will pay the sum of fifty thousand rupees (50,000 Rs.) to any person or persons who may apprehend Sreemunt Dhondoo Punt Nana Saheb of Bithoor, in the district of Cawnpore, commonly called the Nana Saheb, and deliver him into the secure custody of any British Civil or Military officer, or who may give such information and aid as will lead to his apprehension.

"Such person or persons will also receive a free pardon for any offences committed against the State, provided that he or they shall not have taken part in the murder of British subjects".

In order to facilitate the recognition of Nana Saheb, a description of his person and appearance was also published in the Gazette and the newspapers. This is how the description ran :

"DESCRIPTION OF NANA SAHEB OF BITHOOR

The Nana is 42 years of age, hair black, complexion light wheat-coloured, large eyes and flat round face. He is understood now to wear a beard. Height about 5 feet 8 inches. He wears his hair very short (or at least did so), leaving only so much as a small skull-cap would cover. He is full in person, and of powerful frame. He has not the Maratha hooked nose with broad nostrils, but

a straight well-shaped one. He has a servant with a cut ear who never leaves his side."

In spite of this announcement, and the vigorous measures adopted by Government, the Nana Saheb could not be apprehended. Seven months passed by without any news of the Nana reaching the authorities. Government's keenness to capture him was so great that the reward was increased to one lakh of rupees by the following proclamation, dated March 18, 1858, published in the Gazette of India :

"It is hereby notified that a reward of one lac of rupees will be paid to any person who shall deliver alive at any British military post or camp, the Rebel Nana Dhondoo Pant of Bithoor, commonly called Nana Saheb.

"It is further notified that, in addition to this reward, a free pardon will be given to any mutineer or deserter or rebel who may so deliver up the said Nana Dhondoo Pant.

By order of the Right Hon'ble the

Governor-General."

According to this proclamation, if Nana Saheb was delivered by "any mutineer or deserter or rebel", he would, in addition to the monetary reward, also receive a free pardon for his acts, however serious they may have been in the eyes of the British. It was later thought that it would not be proper to extend a free pardon in the case of the following even if any of them brought in the Nana :

(1) Nawab of Farrukhabad.

(2) Nawab of Banda.

(3) Tej Singh, Raja of Mainpuri.

(4) Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly.

(5) Walidad Khan.

In the opinion of the Government the guilt of these persons was too great to warrant a free pardon in any circumstances whatever. For this reason a proclamation was published in the Gazette of India, dated April 18, 1858, by which the above-named persons were excluded from the benefits of the proclamation of March 18, 1858, quoted above.

B. GENERAL BELIEF ABOUT HIS DEATH IN NEPAL

In *Sawane Hayat Salatin Avadh* it is written that after his defeat at Kanpur and Bithoor, Nana Saheb escaped to Avadh, and in the third week of August 1857 wrote to Begum Hazrat Mahal seeking permission to stay in her territory. The Queen immediately sent horses and elephants to bring Nana Saheb to Lucknow with due courtesy. She sanctioned a sum of Rs.15,000 for the feast to be given in his honour. She also presented a jewelled sword to Nana Saheb. According to Kamaluddin, Nana Saheb remained in Lucknow till May 1858 when he proceeded to hide himself in the jungles of Bahraich where he remained up to December. Thereafter he went into the Nepal forests.

It has been stated in the Kanpur Gazetteer that after the loss of the battle of Ahirwan in which Nana's brother, Bala Rao, was severely wounded, Nana Saheb "had fled with all haste to Bithoor whence he escaped across the Ganges only to die, as is now commonly believed, a miserable death from fever and gangrene in the swamps of the Nepal Terai."

(*a*) *Sherer's version*—Mr. J. B. Sherer, the Magistrate and Collector of Kanpur, in his *Havelock's March on Kanpur* has expressed the belief that the death of Nana Saheb took place in the jungles of Nepal in the winter months of 1859-60. He says that the event of the death was marked by the arrival

through Avadh of a body of people who had been in attendance on the Nana or supported by him.

Sherer then narrates what he was told by Brigadier Jwala Prasad who had been captured in Nepal soon after the alleged death of Nana Saheb. He was brought to Kanpur under a very strong guard and had fetters put on him. When Jwala Prasad was in the lock-up at Kanpur awaiting his certain death, Sherer had his fetters loosened in order to enable him to take his meals with a little more convenience ; for this act of small mercy Jwala Prasad was very grateful to him. It was in this state that Sherer asked him about Nana Saheb to which Jwala Prasad replied 'that he was not present when the Nana died, but that he attended when the body was burnt'. From Jwala Prasad's demeanour and the way the answer was given Sherer concluded that Jwala Prasad had no intention to deceive. Moreover, Jwala Prasad knew that his sentence did not depend on Sherer and, for that reason, was not afraid of that officer and gave a straight forward answer. Sherer "fully believed him".

The fact of Nana Saheb's death was also corroborated according to Sherer by the personal barber of Nana Saheb, who along with others had been arrested in Nepal at the time of Jwala Prasad's capture and brought with the latter to Kanpur. When asked whether Nana Saheb was really dead this barber affirmed that it was so.

With the nobility of his heart, Sherer was pained to note the expression of un-faithfulness which this barber exhibited. "I regret to say", writes Sherer, "he was very faithless and ungrateful to his patron. He never mentioned his name without an abusive expression . . . Alas ! for human nature".

In these circumstances Sherer has asserted that the doubts about Nana Saheb's death were unreasonable. He concludes that Nana Saheb's death "was indistinct and insignificant, shrouded by the malarious Nepalese forest, and producing little effect but the dispersion of a band of moribund vagabonds."*

(*b*) *Azimullah Khan's Diary*—Referring to Nana Saheb's last days the Diary begins by saying that Nana Saheb was hiding himself in Lucknow, but afterwards the spies gave information about him to the British. He took whatever property he could take with him and threw the rest in the river Ganga. (It is not clear how this could be because the Ganga is far off from Lucknow. The description is quite confused here). The author says that when Nana Saheb came to Lucknow Nawab Birjis Qadar had 101 guns fired in salute. He was put up in a grand palace and was greatly honoured. Thereafter, Nana Saheb with a large force went into the jungles of Bahraich. The ladies were sent to Nepal (where two villages were purchased in their names), the men remained in the jungles of Bahraich where several encounters took place with the British forces. Later, Nana Saheb crossed into Nepal and was staying near the place where the ladies of his household were living. The Prime Minister of Nepal wanted to arrest Nana Saheb and make him over to the British. It was arranged one day that two persons, one of whom resembled Nana Saheb and the other Bala Rao, should kill each other near the palace of the Ruler of Nepal. One of these persons, named Madhav Lal, resembled Nana Saheb, the other, Alopi Din, a *panda*, resembled Bala Rao. The dead bodies of these two persons were identified as those of Nana Saheb and Bala Rao. They were cremated by the authorities of Nepal and the ashes were sent to the British. But the British continued to be suspicious.

In the concluding portion of the Diary, the author describes how Nana Saheb was

*Havelock's March on Kanpur, pages 328–30.

hiding from place to place under assumed names in order to escape arrest. Eventually in 1926, Nana Saheb died at Nimsar Misrikh (now spelt as Naimisharanya) on the banks *of the Gomati in a remote and deserted place. 'The third son of Nana Saheb performed the funeral rites.'* The author adds that he was *there at that* time and that he gave his *Diary** to Nana Saheb's grandson and then came away.

(*c*) *Newspaper reports*—In the *Friend of India* (Calcutta), the following news appeared in the issue of November 10, 1859, about the death of Nana Saheb in Nepal on September 24, 1859 :

"The death of Nana Saheb continued to be reported. A correspondent of *The Englishman* reports that he died on 24th September of fever at a place called Taraghurrie near Dhang and Deokhur (Nepal). He had suffered previously from repeated attacks and at one time was so ill that his attendant believed him to be dead and the usual gifts were distributed amongst the Brahmans. He, however, recovered partially and did not die till the 24th September. His dead body is said to have been seen by credible witnesses and to have been burnt in their presence with the usual Hindu rites."

A fortnight after, in the issue dated November 24, 1859, of the same paper, a further account of Nana Saheb's death was given. The account was based on what a Brahman priest, named Badri, who attended the Nana during his illness and was present when he died, had stated on his return to Gonda. He said that he received several gold mohurs for his services to the Nana on whose death he left the camp. He produced these gold mohurs in proof of the truth of his statement. It was found that this man was employed as a spy in Nana's camp and the newspaper expressed belief in what he had said.

(*d*) *Kusuma Bai's version*—She was Baji Rao's daughter and had been married at an early age, but was staying in the house of her adoptive brother, Nana Saheb. So, when Nana Saheb's family fled Bithoor she was also among them and came with the party to Nepal. She was there when Nana Saheb's death is alleged to have taken place—her age then was twelve years. She lived up to 1917. Three or four years before her death she had gone to Maharashtra and there gave a brief account of Nana Saheb's death somewhat in these terms :

When Nana Saheb went to Nepal no one was prepared to give him shelter. The Ruler of Nepal compelled him to leave, but how could he go into British territory ; day and night the British authorities were after him. On account of these physical troubles he began to suffer from fever. Nana Saheb was lying unconscious in fever, even then the Ruler of Nepal took no pity on him. The order for him to go out of Nepal was still being pressed upon him. In this condition, the followers of Nana Saheb sent the ladies to a nearby village and took away Nana Saheb himself with five or six sawars to a small spring in the jungle near the village of Deokhari. It was here that he died. The people present there performed his last rites by burning the body according to Hindu custom. With his ashes they came to the ladies amongst whom Kusuma Bai was also present. She said that in her presence the subsequent rites were performed. She was then aged 12.

The well-known historian, Rajwade, relying on this version certified that Nana Saheb's death took place in Nepal shortly after 1857.

*The genuineness of this Diary is greatly in doubt.

There was thus a general belief that after his last and final defeat in the engagement in January 1859 with General Sir Hope Grant, Nana Saheb with his followers crossed the Rapti and took refuge in Nepal where he died after a protracted illness.

The fact of his death at Nepal has, however, not been conclusively proved and doubts have been raised whether his death did actually take place at the place and time stated. The Government of Nepal pretended to show that they were satisfied that he was dead. But the Government of India were still left in doubt and Nana Saheb became a bogey.

From time to time accounts were published in newspapers of persons believed to be Nana Saheb having been caught in the guise of faqirs at this place or that fair in British India. *Sanyasis* were arrested on suspicion of being the Nana. Subsequent investigations showed that they were all cases of mistaken identity. These have been dealt with in the next chapter entitled "Persons suspected as Nana Saheb".

On September 8, 1860, the Resident at Nepal, Colonel Ramsay, wrote a letter to the Government of India in which he expressed grave doubts about the death of Nana Saheb. Copious extracts from the letter were published in an article in Volume XII, pages 59--62 of the Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission (December 1929) by Brajendra Nath Banerji.

An analysis of the whole matter does go to show that the fact of the Nana's death was a made-up one and was given publicity by the Nepal Government for reasons which we shall presently see. But in the meanwhile certain intervening events should be mentioned.

C. HIS PROCLAMATION AND ISHTIHARNAMA ; NEGOTIATIONS FOR SURRENDER

Proclamation

In the South there was practically no sign of up-rising against the British. The rebellion had its roots in North India ; south of the Narmada, the British were having an easy time. In order to incite the people of the South also to rise against the British, Nana Saheb had a forceful proclamation issued to the people of that region. It was issued sometime in September 1858 and a copy of it was forwarded to the Bombay Government with a letter of the Magistrate of Dharwar, dated September 28, 1858. The proclamation, which is preserved in the National Archives, New Delhi, is translated thus from the original Persian character :

"From Dhondo Pant Nana Peshwa, Pant Pradhan, to all the Surinjamdars, Jageerdars, Deshmooks, Deshpandeys and other Jameedars, Patels, Coolkernees (Kulkarnis), Naikwads, Shetsundees and the whole of the population of the Deccan and the Carnatic, it is ordered to be proclaimed that :

The English, who are 'Kaffurs' came to this country under pretence of carrying on trade. Afterwards, instigating sedition among our Surinjamdars and practising treachery, they seized all the Hindu and Mohammedan kingdoms, imprisoning some of the descendants of the former kings and driving others to beggary, they themselves enjoy the country. This is well known to the whole of you.

The 'Kaffurs' upon the strength of their acquisition of the Empire have turned very arrogant and, keeping up outward appearances of justice, have most unjustly destroyed life and acquired wealth and property. They have been endeavouring to delude and convert the population of this country by inducing them to abandon their own religion and caste, but having failed by mild means to do this they were about to use force.

Tyranny, wickedness and injustice having been much practised by the 'Kaffur' English on the faithful and sin-fearing, I have been commissioned by God to punish the 'Kaffurs' by annihilating them and to re-establish the Hindu and Mohammedan kingdoms as formerly and to protect our country, and I have conquered the country north of the Narbuda (Narmada) river. To submit to and live under such wicked 'Kaffurs' is disgraceful. So immediately on the perusal of this proclamatory destroy the 'Kaffurs'. By this you will gain merit, your manliness will be shown and your courage will be proved. "Ye heroes ! this is the best time for you to avenge the wrongs and wickedness perpetrated by the 'Kaffur' English on your grandfathers and on your kings. By allowing such an opportunity to escape do not suffer the stain of being effiminate and foolish to attach to the people of the South. At the present time the English, having disagreements among themselves about their religion, are quarrelling and fighting and killing each other. The French and the Russians who entertained

from a long time a hatred against the English and a design to turn them out of Hindustan have thought this a proper time to carry it out and with this intention they have been sending armies by sea these three months past. The Chinese also have declared war against these "Kaffurs' and the latter having no army to send against the Chinese are much alarmed. The Persians, Afghans and Biloochees, moreover, are ready with their armies collected to aid us. In short, this is the golden time to root out completely the English from this country. The "Kaffur" English, in order to discourage the population, fabricate false information of their having retaken Delhi and other places and having defeated us, and make it known among the public, but such ought not to be believed. If you allow this time to escape all of you will be liable to punishment from us and for that guilt whatever Jageers, Lands, and other subsistence you may possess will be brought under attachment.

This proclamation is published by order of Ullee Shan, Bundeegan, Ullee Hoozoor, the Emperor of Delhi, by Nana Rao Pant Pradhan Peshwa.

Ishtiharnama

The authority of the British Government was completely established in all parts of India by the end of 1858. The leaders of the revolt who had escaped capture had now no alternative but to hide themselves with their adherents in the forests. The majority of them were in the thick and malarious jungles of the Nepal Tarai. Nana Saheb with his followers was also there. He then issued an *Ishtiharnama* bearing date April 20, 1859. It was addressed to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, the Parliament of Great Britain, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, the Governor-General, the Lieutenant Governor and all civil and military officers. It was in the Persian character with the seal of the "Maharaja of Bithoor". Translated into English it reads as follows :

"You have forgiven the crimes of all Hindustan, and murderers have been pardoned. It is strange that your sepoys have killed your women and children and Mummoo Khan and the people of rank of Farrukhabad, who truly are murderers have been forgiven, and you have written to Jung Bahadur to send the Begum and the Rajas to their own country under his guarantee. It is surprising that I, who have joined the rebels from helplessness have not been forgiven. I have committed no murder.

Had General Howla (sic—Wheeler) not sent for me from Bithoor my soldiers would not have rebelled ; besides he did not send for my family to the entrenchment. My soldiers were not of my own country, and I previously urged that so insignificant (*gareeb*) a person as myself could render no material aid to the British. But General Howla (Wheeler) would not listen to me and invited me into the entrenchment.

When your army mutinied and proceeded to take possession of the treasury my soldiers joined them. Upon this I reflected that if I went into the entrenchment my soldiers would kill my family, and that the British would punish me for the rebellion of my soldiers ; it was therefore better for me to die. My ryots were urgent and I was obliged to join the soldiers. For two or three years I petitioned (*"roobkary kiya"*) the Sarkar, but no attention was paid to it.

At Cawnpore the soldiers disobeyed my orders and began killing the English women and the ryots. All I could save by any means I did save and, when they left the entrenchment, provided boats in which I sent them down to Allahabad, your sepoys attacked them. By means of entreaties I restrained my soldiers and saved the lives of 200 English women and children. I have heard that they were killed by your sepoys and budmashes at the time when my soldiers fled Cawnpore and my brother was wounded.

After this I heard of the *Ishtiharnamah* that had been published by you and prepared to fight and up to this *time I have been fighting with you, and while I live, will fight. You are aware that I am not a murderer, nor am I guilty*, neither have you passed any order concerning me. You have no enemy besides me, so *as long as I live I will fight*. I also am a man. I remain two coss distant from . . . . It is strange that you, a great and powerful nation, have been fighting with me for two years and have not been able to do anything ; the more so when it is considered that my troops do not obey me and I have not the possession of my country. You have forgiven the crimes of all and the Nepal Chief is your friend. With all this you have not been able to do anything. You have drawn all to your side and I alone am left, but you will see what the soldiers I have been preserving for two years can do. *We will meet, and then I will shed your blood and it will flow kuree (sic—knee) deep. I am prepared to die.*

If I alone am worthy of being an enemy to so powerful a nation as the British, it is a great honour to me, and every wish of my heart is fulfilled ; death will come to me one day. What then have I to fear ? But those whom you have taken to your side will on the day fixed turn upon you and kill you. You are wise, but have erred in your wisdom.

I sent a letter to Chundernugger, but it did not reach. This has disappointed me or you would have seen what I could do. I will however still try for Chundernugger.

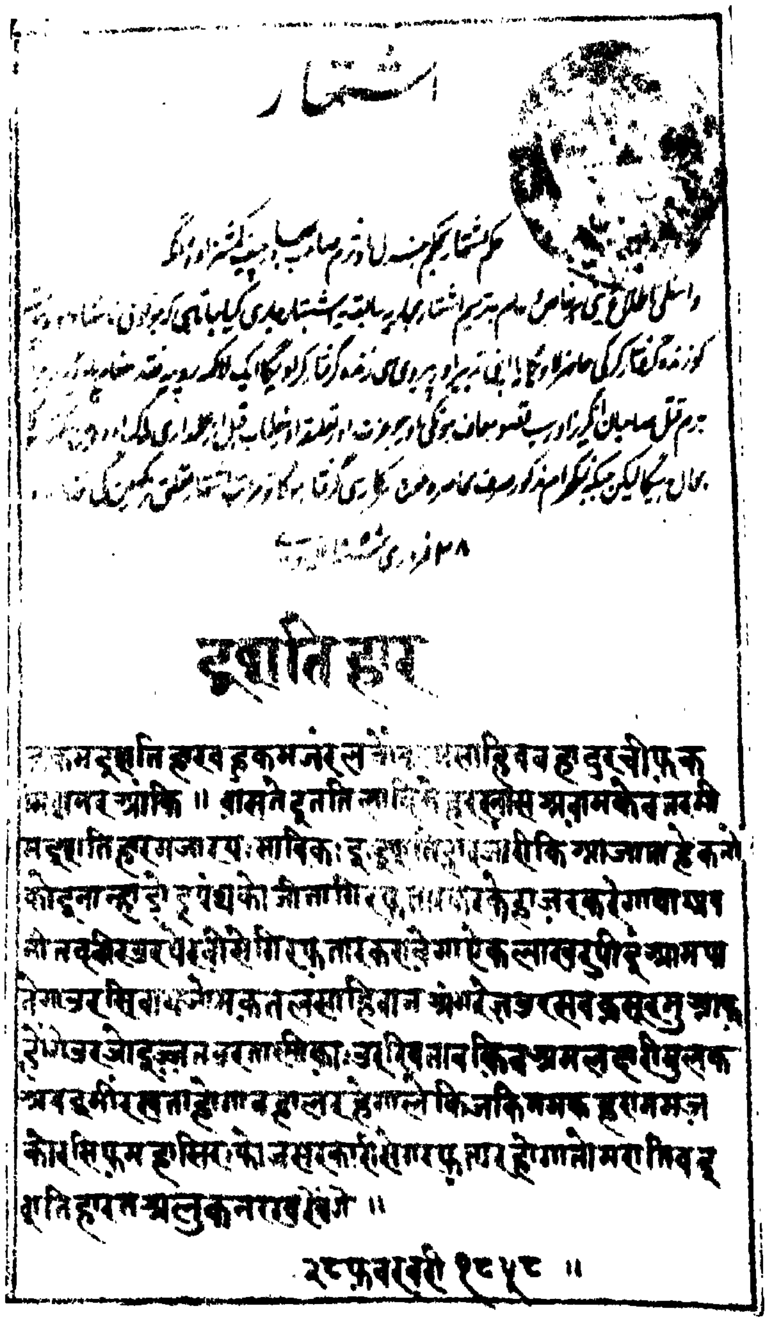
If you think proper send an answer to this.

A wise enemy is better than an unwise friend."†

Negotiations for surrender

A duly sealed copy of this *Ishtiharnama* was sent by Nana Saheb through a messenger to Major Richardson, commanding the

†Foreign Political Consultations, May 27, 1859, Nos. 63-69, National Archives, New Delhi.



Notice in Urdu and Hindi issued by General Outram, Chief Commissioner, Awadh, for a reward of one lakh of rupees for the arrest of Nana Sahib. This was a translation of the original announcement of the Governor General in Council.



GOVERNMENT COLLEGE, BAREILLY

After his defeat at Kanpur, Nana Saheb went about to several places accompanied by his troops. He eventually reached Bareilly on March 2[illegible], 1858 and stayed there till the end of April the same year. With his family and a large treasure he occupied this building as the guest of Khan Bahadur Khan who had declared himself as the Governor of Rohilkhand with headquarters at Bareilly. It was when the position at Bareilly was about to become untenable that he made his way towards the Nepal Terai fighting, along with other leaders, several actions on the way of which one was at Shahjahanpur.

Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, who had his camp in Gorakhpur. Major Richardson sent a reply through the same messenger on the same day saying that the Queen's proclamation was meant for all persons, that the terms under which the Nawab of Farrukhabad, the Nawab of Banda, the Chieftains of Avadh had surrendered themselves, were equally open to him and all persons wishing so to surrender. Major Richardson added that if he, Nana Saheb, had not murdered women and children, as he had avowed in the *Ishtiharnama,* he could surrender without fear. The Major also asked for a reply.

On April 25, 1859, Nana Saheb sent a reply which was received by Brigadier Rowcroft, commanding Gorakhpur District. This too was in the Persian script, its English translation being as follows :

Free Translation in English : "Major Richardson in his reply to my Ishtihar received on the 23rd April, 1859, has noticed only one of the many subjects contained in it. This I accept, but I cannot surrender myself in this manner; if a letter written by Her Majesty the Queen and sealed with her seal, and brought by the Commanding Officer of the French ("Fransee") or the second in Command, reach (*sic*—reaches) me, I will, placing reliance on these officers, accept the terms without hesitation.

Why should I join you, knowing all the *dagabazi* perpetrated by you in Hindustan ? If you are heartily desirous of putting an end to the trouble of the country, an autograph (authographed) letter of Her Majesty, brought by the Commanding Officer of the French, I will accept.

Some years ago, I sent an Eilchee* to London, by whom Her Majesty sent me a letter written with her own hand and sealed with her own seal. This I have in my possession to this day. If you wish it, the thing can only be done in this way, and to this I consent. If not, life must be given up some day. Why then should I die dishonoured ?

There will be war between me and you as long as I have life, whether I be killed or imprisoned or hanged ; and whatever I do will be done with the sword only. Nevertheless if Her Majesty's letter as above described comes to me, and this may be, I will present myself. If you consider it proper, be sure to send me an answer."

The same day the Brigadier sent a reply to Nana Saheb forwarding a copy of the Queen's proclamation, adding that if there was anything which he could not understand, it would be explained to any responsible messenger sent by him and to whom the Brigadier guaranteed safe conduct both ways. The Brigadier cautioned the Nana that by adopting the style of defiance his case became worse because he could never expect to compete with so great a power as the British. The Brigadier implored the Nana to study the most noble terms of the proclamation and to make up his mind.

The Nana Saheb could not place his faith on such vague assurance and decided to pass his days in physical suffering and mental troubles in the malarious Tarai rather than surrender to the British in whose sense of justice and fairplay he had lost all faith some years ago when they had unfairly discontinued even a portion of Baji Rao's pension to him and the other unjust decisions relating to his succession.

It would be of interest to mention that when the Governor General was informed of the terms of Major Richardson's reply he disapproved of its form. The Governor General explained that "all overtures from the Nana, or from any other rebel who has been proscribed or who stands suspected of taking part in murder, are to be answered by a simple reference to the Queen's proclamation and nothing more." The Lieutenant Governor had also taken objection to Major Richardson's reply. In his view the officer had gone beyond the strict terms of the Queen's proclamation. He added that the Major's letter led to the inference that if the guilt of murder could not be brought home to the Nana he would be free from all punishment notwithstanding his persistence in the rebellion. The view of the Lieutenant Governor further was that Major Richardson should have intimated distinctly to the Nana that he would be tried and that if acquitted of murder he would be exempt from capital punishment and nothing more.

*Ambassador or messenger.

In these circumstances, the Governor General asked the Local Government to inform Major Richardson telegraphically that "he is not to reply to any further letters from the Nana without taking instructions upon them and that if any more are received by him he is to send copies immediately to the Local Government and the Government of India." This is what was stated in a telegram dated May 2, from the Government of India to the Local Government. It was followed by a letter dated May 13, 1859, in which the Government of India conveyed further instructions to the Local Government in the following terms :

(1) As the Nana has failed to avail himself of the Royal proclamation the terms of it will no longer be extended to him, it had ceased to have effect so far as he was concerned.

(2) If he is taken captive or if he surrenders he will be tried for the crimes of which he stood charged without reference to the proclamation. If he again offers to surrender, he must be told that he will have to face trial, nothing more should be communicated to him.

D. NANA SAHEB AND THE NEPAL DARBAR.

The number of Indian Sepoys who had taken shelter in Nepal was nearly 60,000. This cannot be said to be an exaggerated figure when it is remembered that after the reconquest of northern India the British laid a big net to get hold of the revolutionaries, either by capture or, as it happened later, by inducing them to voluntary surrender under the terms of the Queen's proclamation. The only place where they could go was Nepal which was an independent sovereignty and where the troops of the Government could not set foot without the permission of the Nepal Darbar. The principal leaders of these revolutionaries were Nana Saheb, his brother Bala Saheb, Queen Hazrat Mahal and her young son, Prince Birjis Qadar.

The Prime Minister of Nepal, Rana Jang Bahadur, was greatly embarrassed by the presence of these persons with their families and the large following of sepoys, who in some cases were also accompanied by the immediate members of their families. His embarrassment arose from the fact that Nepal was an ally of the British, and in fulfilment of that relationship Rana Jang Bahadur had come down with an army of Gurkhas to the succour of the British and had fought along with them in the relief of Lucknow. At the same time he feared public disapprobation by handing over these leaders to the British.

On January 15, 1859, Maharaja Jang Bahadur had written to Begum Hazrat Mahal that she should quit Nepal territory, failing which, in pursuance of the intimate friendship existing between the British Government and the Nepal State, the Gurkha troops would make war upon her. This and the other threats from the Nepal Government had unhinged the refugees. Nevertheless, entertaining some faith in the benevolence of Jang Bahadur they continued their efforts to win his good-will. In consequence, he relented somewhat because, in conformity with the traditions of the Nepalese people, he could not openly apprehend the fugitives and make them over to the British. In these circumstances the Government of Rana Jang Bahadur decided to make the rebel chiefs surrender by persuasion, reserving the use of force as a last resort, if it so became necessary.

Finding themselves in extreme trouble, with little to eat and no place to stay without molestation, many of the leaders surrendered themselves. Some others were suffered to be apprehended by the British authorities direct, and some were made over to them by the officers of the Nepal Government. There were some encounters also between the Nepalese troops and the refugees, in one of

which the famous Rana Beni Madhav Singh of Avadh met his death along with many of his followers.

As regards Begum Hazrat Mahal and her son, the attitude of the Nepal Government was somewhat conciliatory and they were eventually allowed to stay on.

Similarly in regard to Nana Saheb, his brother and their family, Jang Bahadur did not consider it proper to adopt the extreme course. They were eventually left to themselves, but in doing so Jang Bahadur felt it necessary to give some satisfaction to the Government of India. This he did by adopting a novel course as we shall presently see.

With regard to Nana Saheb particularly, Rana Jang Bahadur was in great predicament. Jang Bahadur knew that if there was any person against whom the British entertained the bitterest feeling it was Nana Saheb. He knew also that if he turned over Nana Saheb the British Government would try him for his life and in all probability he would be executed. Jang Bahadur shuddered at the prospect of being an instrument in bringing about the death of a high class Brahman. These feelings were in conformity with the traditions of Nepal where a Brahman was held so sacred that even if he committed murder he could not be punished with death. Indeed, in one of his conversations with Colonel Ramsay, the British Resident at Nepal, the Rana had told him that if a Brahman were to kill the king or a woman or a Brahmani bull (the slaughter of a bull was considered a greater crime in Nepal than the slaying of a woman), he could not be executed for it.* The scruples of Rana Jang Bahadur about Nana Saheb were thus understandable.

A further complication arose from the fact that the Nana's capture carried a reward of one lakh of rupees. This was an amount tempting enough even to a Nepalese Prince, but Jang Bahadur would not dare to take it openly as a price of surrendering a Brahman to be tried for his life. Such was the opinion expressed by Col. Ramsay in the letter to the Government of India to which a reference has already been made. Colonel Ramsay further records that Maharaja Jang Bahadur had told him near about June 1860 that he (Jang Bahadur) "*could* catch him (the Nana Saheb) at any time he pleased, but that it could only be done by treachery and that he would do nothing that was dishonourable".

Placed in such a position Maharaja Jang Bahadur wrote a letter to Nana Saheb suggesting that Nepal was no place for him and his followers. The reply sent by Nana Saheb is remarkable for its fearless tone and will interest the reader :

"We have received your letter. We have been hearing the reputation of Nepal at distant places, all along the country. Indeed, in spite of my reading the history of many ancient kings of India and seeing the character of many present rulers, I believe that Your Majesty's deeds stand matchless! For you did not hesitate to render help even to the British—the very people who have borne every sort of ill-will towards your people. And yet, as soon as they asked for help you have rushed to their assistance. There is no limit to this your generosity! Well then, shall it be unnatural of me to expect that the descendant of the Peshwas who had all along been friendly towards your people will not be denied help from Your Majesty, specially when you have given it so freely to the British who bore avowed enmity towards you? He who admitted the enemy inside will not at least turn his friend out!

It is utterly unnecessary to repeat here the well-known story of the wrongs under which Hindustan is groaning, how the British people have broken treaties, trampled down their promises, snatched away the crowns of the Indian Rajas. It is equally unnecessary to describe how even the religion of the land is threatened as soon as the kingdoms of the land are destroyed. It is too well known. It is for this reason that this war is waged. We are sending Shrimant Bala Saheb, our brother, to you and he will clear up other things personally"†

This letter did not make matters any the easier for Jang Bahadur who then sent his Colonel Balbhadra Singh to Nana Saheb and

*Letter from Col. Ramsay, British Resident at Nepal to the Government of India, dated September 8, 1860, quoted in the article by Brajendra Nath Banerji at pp. 60—62 of the Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission, Vol. XII (December 1909).

†Charles Ball, *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II.

the other leaders. *He was told that if Maharaja Jang Bahadur gave them his help then* they would dash on Calcutta and conquer territories for the Nepal Government. However, *if the Nepal Government could not give* help, then at least it should give them asylum in Nepal where they will live under the orders of the Darbar. Whereupon Colonel Balbhadra Singh advised them to seek the asylum of the British who had 'opened wide the door of mercy'. He received the reply that they had heard of the Queen's proclamation, but that they would not prefer to save their lives at the expense of some of their other comrades whom the British would not spare in any circumstances. They added that they were ready to throw their arms before Maharaja Jang Bahadur and would submit to him unhesitatingly even if they were to be killed. But they could not submit to the British by risking some of their own brethren to the vengeance of Government.

There were several consultations of this nature with Rana Jang Bahadur at the end of which he unequivocally told them that if he had wanted to help them he would not have gone with his army to the relief of the British in the battle of Lucknow. At the same time he had allowed the British to enter Nepal in pursuit of the refugees. Thus, losing all hope most of the men hid their arms and made for their homes. The British authorities facilitated their return by refraining from causing them the least trouble. Only a handful unconquerable souls stayed back thinking it dishonourable to surrender. So, instead of returning to their homes they escaped to the jungles preferring the life of half-starvation and total privation to the dishonour of abject surrender. Among those who remained on were Nana Saheb, Bala Saheb and Queen Hazrat Mahal.

About this time Nana Saheb wrote a letter to General Sir Hope Grant in which he condemned the unjust rule of the British and concluded with these poignant words: "What right have you to occupy India and declare me an outlaw ? Who gave you the right to rule over India ? What ! you, Firangis, are the kings and we thieves in this our own country ?" These are said to be the last recorded words of that great leader in his utter extremities and misfortune.

What actually happened to Nana Saheb thereafter is one of the mysteries of 1857.

Reverting now to the story of Nana Saheb's death, Jang Bahadur appears to have taken recourse to a sort of stratagem. He began to tell the British Resident, Colonel Ramsay, that the ailing Nana would soon die. Some time in September-October 1859 a short report of a few lines about Nana Saheb's death was sent by the Nepal Darbar to the Resident who felt great doubt about its authenticity in the circumstances stated. He thought it likely that the reported death was a ruse to cover the Nana's escape into the mountains. Some days later the Resident was, on enquiry, told by Rana Jang Bahadur that he had received no further particulars of the death, whereupon the Resident observed that the original report required confirmation. To which the Rana replied that he himself was quite convinced of its truth. But the Resident was left unconvinced because the Rana had declared long before-hand that the event would take place, and when it was reported he seemed anxious that it should at once be taken for granted, and avoided recurring to the subject.

It was in this way that Maharaja Jang Bahadur solved a difficult situation. He had thus given what he believed to be full satisfaction to the British without damaging his reputation by turning over the Nana which course he could never have adopted. But the British Resident, though he did not press Jang Bahadur by further uneasy enquiries on the subject, carried the impression, since the time he was told about the impending death of Nana Saheb, that he would be suffered to make his escape. This impression was

strengthened by the subsequent circumstances attending the report about his death. The Resident duly reported his impression to the Government of India.

Jang Bahadur's position *vis-a-vis* the Nana was delicate for another reason also. Nana Saheb had appealed to the compassion of the Prime Minister of a brave nation, referring to the latter's Kshattriya blood and to himself as a Brahman by saying that it was enjoined by the religion of the Kshattriyas that they should give protection to cows and Brahmans. It was in this context that Jang Bahadur had told one of the officers of the British Residency that if, when he (Jang Bahadur) goes down into the Tarai at the head of his troops in the cold weather, the Nana were to seek an interview with him and were to throw himself down at his feet and claim his protection as a Brahman, what could he do ?

Colonel Ramsay gave another strong reason for doubting the reports about Nana Saheb's alleged death. The family of Nana Saheb showed no signs of mourning on hearing about the death, nor did they observe the customs which the Maharashtra Brahmans are usually so punctilious in following. He then proceeds to say : "Their hair was long and they wore coloured clothes. Some weeks, however, after their arrival here, but long before Bala Rao's wife died, they went through the ceremonies which attend mourning for a near relative. They cut off their hair, dressed themselves in white, and distributed alms to a large number of *faqirs* who were fed, as is customary upon such occurrences, with *dahi, choora,* sweetmeats, etc. etc. I got glimpses on many occasions of several of the members of the family in their attire when they first came up here, but on the day of the late marriage of the heir-apparent, when I passed their residence to take part in the procession, they were sitting at a large open window, all clad in white, and a Brahman Havildar who is constantly with me (the man who was promoted and was presented with a sword by Lord Canning for good conduct in the eventful year 1857) afterwards told me that their hair was cut and that they then for the first time adopted the usual marks of mourning."*

Baji Rao's widows settle in Nepal

The two widows of Baji Rao, the widow of Nana Saheb, and the widow of Bala Rao (Nana's brother) were allowed to spend their last days in Nepal. Baji Rao's daughter, Kusuma Bai, was also with them. She had been married prior to the mutiny but subsequent to the death of Baji Rao. But the girl, instead of proceeding to her husband's house at Gwalior, had remained at Bithoor with Nana Saheb. It was thus that she found her way to Nepal along with the other ladies of the Peshwa's family. Some time after the restoration of peace, she came down and joined her husband in Gwalior.

Baji Rao's senior widow was known in Nepal as Dakshini Maharani Peshwa. She bought there a large estate comprising some eight villages in exchange for gold and precious jewellery. These villages are known by the collective name of Ranigunj and lie on the border between India and Nepal. She died in 1896 whereupon the villages and other properties of Dakshini Maharani were taken over by the Nepal Darbar.

E. DID HE TAKE REFUGE IN MACCA OR TURKEY ?

A most extraordinary account of Nana Saheb's last days is given in the book *Extra-Special Correspondent* by G. Ward Price, a veteran English journalist, and published in 1957 by George Harrap & Co., London. The book contains reminiscences of the exciting

*Col. Ramsay's letter, dated September 8, 1860, already referred to in an earlier foot-note.

life of the author who has roamed the world for exclusive stories.

According to the account given by Ward Price, Nana Saheb spent twenty years in Macca and ten years in Constantinople and was thereafter murdered for some political reasons. Here is the full story in the own words of Ward Price :

"In those days there existed, under the British Foreign Office, a department known as the Levant Consular Service. This was recruited among young Englishmen who, after a special training at Cambridge University, were sent out to Turkey as 'student interpreters' to qualify as specialists in the problems of what is now known as the Middle East. Their early years were spent as vice-consuls in the primitive towns of Asia Minor, such as Erzeroum, Diarbekir and Van, where they had the invidious function of keeping watch on the corrupt and oppressive practices of the local Turkish Valis, or governors, and their subordinates.

Some of this picked team became talented diplomatists and rose to posts of importance in the British Foreign Service. Typical among them was the Consul-General in Constantinople, Sir Harry Eyres, who afterwards became British Minister in Albania. He was a handsome man, of great dignity and charm.

It was from Sir Harry Eyres that I heard the strange story of the end of Nana Saheb who in the Indian Mutiny of 1857 captured Cawnpore and whose subsequent fate had remained a mystery.

Many years after the Mutiny, Mr. Arthur Baker, the proprietor of the largest British store in Constantinople was visited by a middle-aged Turk with the request that he would go to see an old Englishwoman in his father's harem.

'You know perfectly well that I cannot possibly visit a Turkish harem,' said the surprised Mr. Baker.

'This is a special case for which safe arrangements have been made' was the reply. 'She is my mother, and very old. She was born into an English family, and until she was fourteen years of age she lived in India. She is now dying, and her last wish is to speak to one of her fellow-countrymen again.'

Baker eventually consented, and he afterwards declared that this visit to the weary old Englishwoman at the point of death in Stamboul was one of the most pathetic experiences of his life. The husband was away, the servants had been sent out, and he found lying on a couch, a shrivelled old lady who tried plaintively to speak to him in English. For fifty years she had never used her native tongue. Yet there was no mistaking her national character although her whole life had been spent as a prisoner of Asiatics. Her name was Alice Glasson, and she was the daughter of a British captain.

When Nana Saheb captured Cawnpore in 1857, she was a girl of fourteen and was carried off to be added to his harem where she remained for twenty years.

She had then been taken to Mecca where she had lived for twenty two years. She was next brought to Constantinople and had been there for about ten years when Baker visited her.

She told him that while at Mecca she had several times tried to get letters out to England by a returning pilgrim. Each time she was betrayed, and eventually resigned herself to her fate. She explained to Baker that her husband was bitterly anti-British.

Soon afterwards she died, and was buried as a Turkish woman in the cemetery of Eyoub.

At about the same time her aged husband was murdered in Stamboul *for political reasons connected with* Sultan Abdul Hamid. After the murder Baker told his story in confidence to a Turkish Minister called Riza Pasha who said 'The husband was an Indian Moslem and came to Constantinople as a political agent of the Cherif of Mecca. He passed under the name of Dundhu Panth, but you British knew him as Nana Saheb.'

Some years later, while he was still a junior consul, Sir Harry Eyres was sent to Acre to see the Baab, the head of a small Shi'ite sect expelled from Persia. While he was there some Indian Moslems who were also visiting the Baab remarked that Nana Saheb had been killed in Constantinople—thus confirming Riza's story."

This is a very unusual account and, due to the eminence of Ward Price as a journalist, cannot be lightly set aside. The story poses a question of great historic value relating to the events of 1857, particularly because the last days of Nana Saheb have so far remained a mystery although many conflicting accounts have been given about his wanderings and capture.

It is to be noted, however, that there is no corroborative evidence in support of the above story. In fact the evidence so far published goes against it as will be seen from the analysis which follows.

In the *Kanpur Narrative* have been published five lists :

(i) List No. 1 contains, (*a*) the names of those who went into the entrenchment, including European civilians of Kanpur, (*b*) the names of those "who are supposed to have perished outside the entrenchment"—these are mostly the names of non-official ladies and gentlemen, (*c*) names of European troops who were killed between June 6 and 30, 1857, (*d*) names of the women of the 32nd Regiment and the number of their children and (*e*) names of musicians of Native Corps and their families ;

(ii) List No. 2 contains the names of those who left Fatehgarh on June 3, 1857, and "are supposed to have perished at Kanpur on the 12th of that month" ;

(iii) List No. 3 contains the names of those who left Fatehgarh on July 4, 1857 ; some of these were killed on the way, the rest were captured at Bithoor on July 10 and taken to Kanpur ;

(iv) List No. 4 contains the names of individuals who entered the entrenchment and ultimately escaped, and

(v) List No. 5 contains the names of the residents of Kanpur who did not enter the entrenchment and yet escaped with the aid of "natives".

These lists are authentic and purport to be exhaustive, but in none of them does occur the name of Captain Clayton, the father of the lady mentioned in Ward Price's book. Nor is there any mention of any "Alice Clayton" the name of the lady in the book. In fact no "Clayton", Mr., Mrs. or Miss, is mentioned in any of the lists. The question of the capture of "Miss Alice Clayton" by Nana Saheb for his 'harem' does not, therefore, arise at all.

It is also in evidence that after Nana Saheb had left Bithoor on the re-capture of Kanpur by the British and was, along with a sizeable retinue and the immediate members of his family, hiding in a jungle there was no European lady in his camp. Two residents of Bithoor, Narain and Bhow Rai, were sent out as spies by the authorities to gain information about Nizam Ali Khan, a sawar of the 2nd Light Cavalry, who was reported to have taken away the daughter of General Wheeler at the time of the happenings at the Sattichaura Ghat. They had given evidence about the composition and the condition of Nana Saheb's camp in the jungle. They got access into the camp through Gopal, a sepoy at the Nana's camp, whom they used to know at Bithoor. The following is the relevant portion of their deposition :

"He (Gopal) asked why we had come to the jungles, we told him, to seek service through an eunuch named Narain in the Nana's employ, and then reminded Gopal that we had seen him at Bithoor ; he told us that we must be very careful as it was dangerous entering the camp, and that as we had come thus far he was to take us with him as residents of his village which was near Banaras. We were six days in the Nana's camp, and saw his brothers, Bala and Baba Bhatt, also the following individuals of his house-hold : Shudaseo Punt, Odagur the treasurer, Abhadunk paymaster, Dharee, the eunuch Narain, Subadar Bajaba, Beharee chobdar, Pachaie an old and favourite attendant of the Nana, Lutchmun the driver of the Nana's bullock-carriage, Mahadeo the baker, Dhunee the gardener, Bukna the bath attendant, Cheitoo the sweeper, Lalla the boatman, Ramchurn and Pooloo, Hindu wrestlers, and Nujeem the Mohamedan wrestler. These we recognized from having seen them at Bithoor. We heard that the widows of Baji Rao were in camp ; they were the two called Mooneea Baie and See Baie, also a daughter of the Peshwa's named Beea : there were also the Nana's wife and Bala's wife and another lady whose name I do not know.

Question : Was she an European ?

Answer : No, a native lady, the wife of a Rao residing to the South, but we do not know the name.

Question : Did you hear of any Europeon ladies in camp ?

Answer : No.

Question : Did you see the Nana ?

Answer : Yes, when he used to go down to the river to bathe ; he was attended by Bala and his servants with an umbrella held over his head.

A number of people used to assemble to pay their respects to him as he passed. The Nana had shaved off his beard. Bala had the mark of a bullet wound on his right shoulder. We heard in camp that the Baies were anxious to get away from the jungles.

Question : Did you hear anything of Nizam Ali Khan ?

Answer : We did not, for we were afraid to leave Gopal's protection and be too particular in enquiries."

Now, had Miss Alice Clayton been taken over by Nana Saheb for his "harem" she should surely have been in the camp in the jungles.

A further circumstance against the story in Ward Price's book is that there is no mention in the evidence of any of the 63 witnesses examined at the instance of Lt. Colonel Williams of any European girl having been taken by Nana Saheb as a mistress in his household. Nor is there any such mention in Nanak Chand's journal. On the other hand, the evidence is to the effect that Nana Saheb had actually made those sepoys who had taken away some European ladies at the Ghat to deliver them up.

In these circumstances it is difficult to rely on the story in the book of Ward Price. The material so far available in published records is against the possibility of Nana Saheb having taken refuge in Macca and Turkey and spent over thirty years in these places.

It is possible, however, that the person believed to be Nana Saheb, as in Ward Price's book, was a case of mistaken identity, that is to say he was some other Indian who had taken part in the 'mutiny' and who went first to Macca and then to Turkey. The only one who could have been such a person was Azimullah Khan about whose last days nothing is definitely known. It is possible that Azimullah Khan assumed the name of Nana Saheb in Macca and Turkey because Nana Saheb's name was then known all the world over and Azimullah Khan might have thought that by impersonating Nana Saheb he would receive consideration from the Governments of Arabia and Turkey. A point is added to this possibility by the fact that returning back from England, Azimullah Khan had visited Constantinople and other Middle East countries—he had also been to the Crimea to see the Crimean war. Azimullah Khan was well-versed in English and other languages and had a most impressive and charming personality ; so he could freely move about in foreign countries, particularly those under Muslim rule. This could not have been possible for Nana Saheb who knew no English and who had no experience of foreign countries nor could his orthodox manner of living permit him to go to Macca and Turkey.

In order, however, to get some verification of this possibility, the present author wrote a letter to Mr. Ward Price explaining the case and enquiring whether he could throw any light on the possibility of the gentleman at Constantinople being Azimullah Khan. Mr. Ward Price replied to say that the account in his book was based on what he had heard from Sir Harry Eyres, the British Consul-General in Constantinople, that Sir Harry Eyres was now dead and that he himself knew nothing further in the affair. A copy of the author's letter to Mr. Ward Price and the latter's reply will be found in the *Annexure* at the end of this chapter.

F. A CLAIMANT . THE NANA SAHEB MEMORIAL.

A few years ago, a person by name Suraj Pratap, resident of Pratapgarh, claimed himself to be the descendant of Nana Saheb. His version is that Nana Saheb returned from Nepal towards 1900 and settled down secretly at Pratapgarh with his wife. He says that

16

List of References. | Pl. R. Nos. | R. No. 4117 1879

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

General.

Petition. From Nana Sahib of Bithoor.

Dated —

Recd. 29th April

No. —

Enc. —

(Spare copies)

Queries and Routine Orders.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM.

Transferred for disposal to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

By Order, &c.,

Simla

The 25 April 1879.

Lieut.-Colonel,

Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

POCKET ON THE LETTER OF 1879 PURPORTING TO HAVE COME FROM THE NANA.

(See next page)

THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER

On April [illegible] 1879 was received in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, a letter purporting to have been sent by Nana Saheb. The letter was originally received in the Viceroy's office whence it was transferred for disposal to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department on April 2[illegible] 1879 over the signature of the Private Secretary to the Viceroy.

The purport of the letter or petition was recorded in a clerical note of the Foreign Department. The purport was [illegible] and [illegible]: it was to the effect that Nana Saheb was on his deathbed; that he had a plan for clearing the country of Christians; that he was connected with a person called Sirpesa who had a claim on the *gaddi* of Jaipur; that there was treasure [illegible] at a certain specified place. It concluded with the request that the treasure be dug up and passed on to Sirpesa who was then said to be in England.

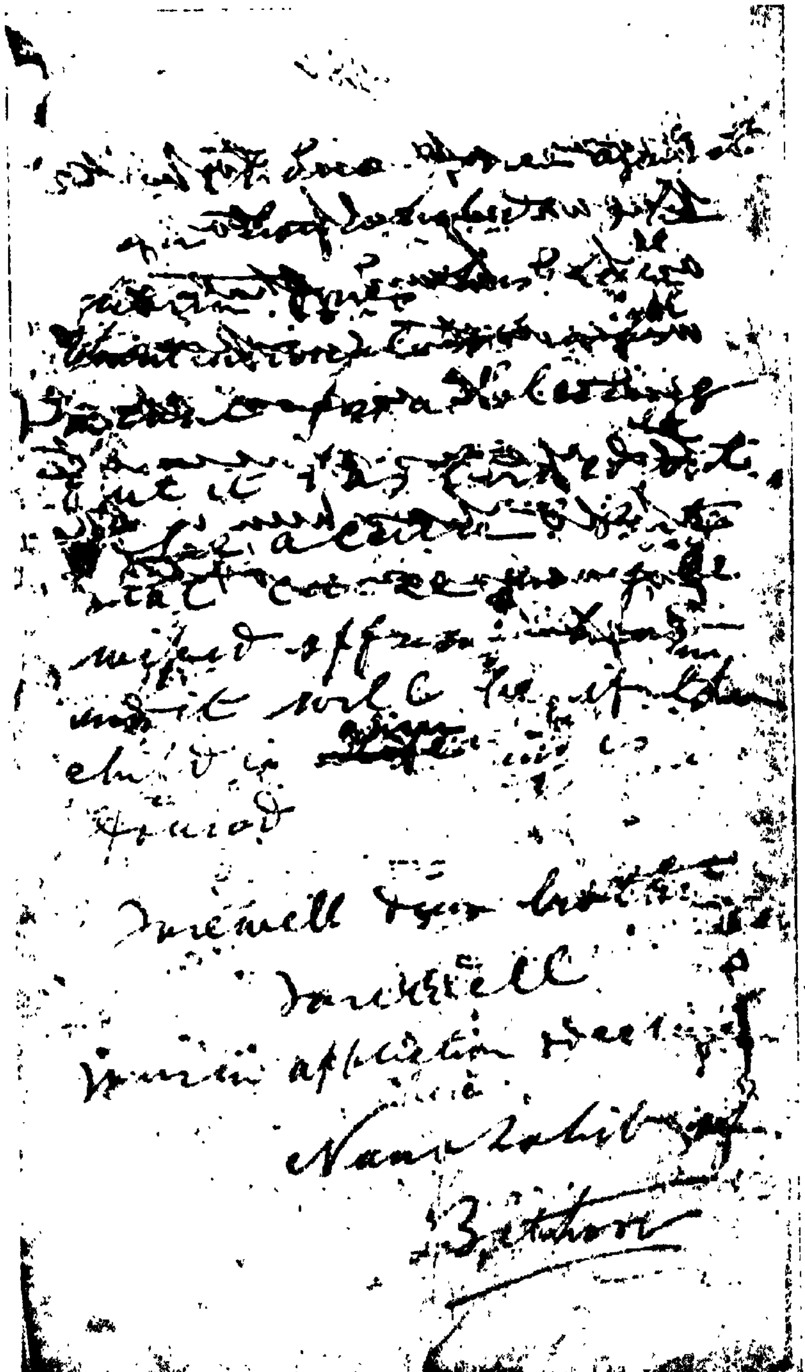
The first page of the letter [illegible] so it is not possible to say to whom it was addressed. The last page ends with the words "Farewell dear brother, farewell. Yours in affliction and decline ..." over the [illegible] signature of Nana Saheb of Bithoor.

The petition read for some incoherence little sense. There is nothing in it to make it clear who this Sirpesa was and what relationship Nana Saheb had with him.

Eventually, after consultation with the Home Department, the petition was filed on May 20, 1879. It can be seen in the National Archives, New Delhi with Foreign Department [illegible] of 1879, Proceedings for May 1879, No. 408.

The existence of the letter was first brought to light by Dr. M. L. Bhargava in his Hindi book [illegible] published by the Information Department of the Uttar Pradesh Government 1959. He has suggested that investigations into this strange letter might throw light on the last days of Nana Saheb which at present are shrouded in mystery. For once the authenticity of the letter is established it would conclusively prove that, contrary to general belief, Nana Saheb did not die in Nepal in 1859.

See also page 468 (b).



THE LAST PAGE OF THE LETTER

MORE ABOUT THE LETTER

(Continued from page [illegible])

The writer of the letter lamented the fate of Sarjuga, adding that he did not even know whether the child was alive or dead. He had hoped to see him grow up as a great man, and if that [illegible] had [illegible] of his [illegible] would have been greatly mitigated! Then follow incoherent [illegible] about the early life of the child and his mother who had been shown a still-born child in place of the one she had already given birth to; that though the lady's suspicion had been aroused she kept silent from fear that her husband might get angry on her coming back to a still-born child. This was the reason, the letter says, why the mystery of the case was not made known. Returning to the boy, the letter says that on occasions he had behaved with some [illegible] courage.

There is also a mention of a faithful person, Debi by name, with whom the child had remained for some time, of the suspicion of the Police, of the return of Debi and Sarjuga to Kanpur, and the separation of the child from Debi caused by the authorities.

Writing about himself the petitioner says that he would not live to show his face, that after his death there would be found in his [illegible] documents which would prove of great value in the history of the historical places, particularly in England.

The entire letter is full of similar disjointed and apparently incongruous statements which [illegible]. It was presumably because of this that the Government of India did not take the letter seriously and dropped it after a summary enquiry. There is little doubt that, if the Government of India had believed that the letter had come from the real Nana, they would have taken all measures to be ready with a view to apprehending him. Their eagerness to catch Nana Saheb and to try him had not diminished, as would be evident from the fact that in [illegible] a person named Jamna Das alias Hanwantao was arrested on suspicion of being the Nana, and a very thorough enquiry to establish his identity had been made, first by the District Magistrate of Kanpur and then by Mr. Fitzpatrick, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Legislative Department. The latter had been specifically deputed for the purpose and he examined many witnesses at Gwalior and Kanpur. It was only when it was conclusively proved that the prisoner was not the real Nana that he was released. An account of these proceedings will be read at chapter [illegible] section D, which begins at page [illegible].

his father, Ram Sundar Lal, was the son of Nana Saheb, that he is thus his grandson. He petitioned the Uttar Pradesh Government desiring that he be declared as the grandson of Nana Saheb. In support, he produced the Patwari's Examination Certificate of his father and an alleged will of Nana Saheb. But the certificate really gave no support to the case. In it the name of Ram Sunder Lal's father has been given as Madho Lal. There is a subsequent addition in the certificate in which the words 'Nana Saheb' have been inserted after the name of Madho Lal. The caste there is shown as Kayestha.

As regards the alleged will of Nana Saheb, this appeared to be a made-up document, and after due enquiry its authenticity remained completely doubtful. Suraj Pratap also produced statements of two persons, residents of district Pratapgarh, but these also were found to give no support to his claim.

He also produced a printed booklet purporting to be the 'Diary of Diwan Azimullah Khan.' This is both in Hindi and Urdu. In the Hindi version there is an admixture of Brij Bhasha and the local dialect, while in the Urdu copy there is an admixture of Hindi and Urdu styles. Its authenticity has so far remained doubtful. The last pages of it, in which Suraj Pratap's relationship with Nana Saheb has been described clearly, appear to be interpolations even if the rest of the diary could, for the sake of argument, be accepted as authentic.

In these circumstances the Uttar Pradesh Government came to the conclusion that Suraj Pratap's claim was untenable. The declaration asked for by him was accordingly refused.

Memorial to Nana Saheb

Nana Saheb left no children. So, after his death the family of Baji Rao became extinct.

On the occasion of the centenary celebrations of 1857, the Uttar Pradesh Government erected a memorial to Nana Saheb at Bithoor. It is in the form of a bronze statue installed on the land which had formed part of Baji Rao's mansion, and which has now been laid out. On the pedestal the following words are inscribed :

भविष्य दृष्टा और क्रांति सृष्टा
नाना साहब धोंडो पन्त
जिनकी त्याग ज्योति भारत को
चिरकाल तक प्रकाशवान रक्खेगी

The road which branches off from the Grand Trunk Road at Kalyanpur and goes to Bithoor, a distance of seven miles (twelve miles from Kanpur), has also been named as "Nana Saheb Peshwa Marg" to commemorate the memory of the great leader.

ANNEXURE

(*Referred to at page 468*)

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO MR. G. WARD PRICE, JOURNALIST AND CORRESPONDENT, LONDON, DATED AUGUST 4, 1958

DEAR SIR,—I beg to introduce myself as an Indian citizen, resident of the city of Lucknow in the State of Uttar Pradesh. I hold an appointment under the State Government of Uttar Pradesh, but this letter is entirely unconnected with my official position. It is concerned with a subject in which I have been making research for some time, viz. the life and history of Nana Saheb of 1857 fame. And my reason for writing this letter is that in your recently published book, *Extra Special Correspondent*, you have made a mention of the last days of Nana Saheb, which, according to the account in your book, were spent in Turkey.

2. Some months ago, I had read a newspaper review of your book. In it was quoted the account of the wife or the mistress of Nana Saheb, originally Miss Alice Clayton. The facts about Nana Saheb mentioned in the review seemed to be very unusual, and I immediately ordered a copy through my book-supplier who got it from the publishers within a few days.

3. I have found it a charming book of great historical value. But much more startling is the account contained in it about the subject of my interest, viz. Nana Saheb. The account is contained at pages 11-16 and, for ready reference, I am enclosing the relevant extract.

4. According to the narrative in your book:

(a) Miss Clayton had been carried off by Nana Saheb in 1857 when he captured Cawnpore; she was then 12 years of age;

(b) she remained in Nana Saheb's harem (in India) for 20 years;

(c) then she had been taken to Mecca where she remained for 22 years;

(d) thereafter, Nana Saheb took her to Constantinople where she remained for ten years and then died. Nana Saheb had come to Constantinople as a political agent of the Sherif of Mecca; *he was believed to be an 'Indian Moslem'*.

(e) Nana Saheb had been murdered in Constantinople for political reasons connected with the Sultan of Turkey some time after Miss Clayton's death.

5. All this reads most extraordinary because the records that we have here in India go to show:

(a) that Nana Saheb was an orthodox Brahman, that he had a wife living, that he could not, according to the traditions of his family, take a Christian as his wife, and that these circumstances make it extremely improbable that he would have taken the lady mentioned in your book, viz. Miss Clayton as his wife or partner;

(b) that at the time of the capture of Cawnpore, Nana Saheb did not, in fact, take any European lady in his household;

(c) that when he left Kanpur and afterwards disappeared, he did not take with him any European lady. In fact, he had with him only his wife, his brother, his brother's wife, his adoptive mother, a step-mother, a married step-sister and a personal servant:

(d) that there are authentic lists of Europeans of Kanpur, including civilians and soldiers, who were killed, wounded or taken prisoner during the time of Nana Saheb's rule. These lists are comprehensive, but there is no mention of any Miss Clayton or Captain Clayton or any Clayton whatsoever. Apart from Kanpur, there was no other place from which, according to proved facts, Nana Saheb could have captured any European lady. How could then any Miss Clayton fall into the hands of Nana Saheb.

6. In the light of these facts it seems extremely improbable that Nana Saheb could have taken any Miss Clayton or any other European woman in his harem.

7. Against this improbability, there is the statement of an English lady. She was old, and the statement was made when she was in the contemplation of death. And as we know, "Truth sits upon the lips of dying men". In addition, she could have no motive in calling one of her countrymen to her death-bed in those unusual circumstances and giving him a narration of her life of suffering.

8. There is also no reason to doubt the account which Sir Harry Eyres gave you about this mysterious lady. It is true that Sir Harry had no first-hand knowledge of the woman's story, but there is also no reason why Mr. Baker, the English merchant, should have told Sir Harry anything but the truth.

9. And added to these factors is the fact that we in India have not been able to trace with any definiteness the whereabouts of Nana Saheb after the recapture of Kanpur by the British nor do we know for certain where and when he died. It is, therefore, not possible to impugn the story of Mr. Baker on any conclusively proved facts.

10. Nana Saheb's going out of India to escape the British Government is of course quite probable, but from the account in the book it appears that he left India 20 years after the Mutiny. If he was able to evade the British authorities for 20 years, it is strange that after such a long period he should have found it necessary to leave the country for reasons of safety. The general belief is that Nana Saheb remained in Nepal Terai wandering from place to place because the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal, Rana Jang Bahadur, would not allow him an asylum in his territory. It is further believed that he died in the jungles a few years after the Mutiny. All the same, there is nothing patently improbable in Nana Saheb having been placed in such circumstances as necessitated his departure even after a lapse of 20 years. To this extent, therefore, the story told by Mr. Baker could perhaps be accepted.

11. But serious doubts arise about Nana Saheb having taken Miss Alice Clayton in his harem.

12. Could it be a case of mistaken identity so far as Nana Saheb himself was concerned? In 1857, Nana Saheb had a close associate, by name Azimullah Khan, who, shortly before the Mutiny, had visited the United Kingdom and some European countries, including Turkey. He was well-versed in the English and the French languages, and by the charm of his personality had established some contacts in England. He might have created some contacts in Turkey also, although we have no proof of this except that he had been a visitor to Constantinople. After the recapture of Kanpur by the British, nothing is definitely known of Azimullah Khan either. His end, like that of Nana Saheb, has been a mystery. The possibility of Azimullah Khan having gone to Macca and thence to Turkey is greater than the possibility of Nana Saheb (who was an orthodox Brahman and did not know English and had not been outside India) going and settling in a Muslim country. It is on record that several leaders of the Revolt of 1857, Muslims by religion, did go to Macca to escape the British, although none of them waited as long as 20 years. Is it that Azimullah Khan gave himself out as Nana Dhondu Panth (whose name was well-known outside India also) in the hope that he might receive the sympathy of the people of those countries? And Miss Clayton could not have been able to detect this assumption of name by Azimullah Khan.

13. If, therefore, the supposed Nana Saheb who died in Turkey, was really Azimullah Khan, then the story told by Mr. Baker could not be doubted on the basis of proved facts available to us in India.

14. I must apologize for the length of this letter; a journalist of your reputation must be a very busy person. But, believing in your capacity, I have ventured to write in the hope that you might find it possible to throw some further light on this mysterious subject. I shall be most grateful for this assistance in solving a riddle of Indian history.

15. Finally, be so good as to bear with me for the liberty I have taken in writing this letter—we have still bonds of friendship and affection with the English people.

Reply from Mr. G. Ward Price, 40, Hill Street, London, dated August 22, 1958.

Dear Sir,—I thank you for your long and interesting letter of August 4, dealing with the story of Nana Saheb.

I regret that I can throw no further light upon this than the narrative related by the late Sir Harry Eyres.

In view of the trouble that you have taken to supply me with the details of another version it occurs to me that you might like to have them back, and I accordingly return the documents herewith.

Yours very truly,

G. WARD PRICE.

Mr. A. S. Misra,
25, Blunt Square,
Lucknow.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

PERSONS SUSPECTED TO BE NANA SAHEB

A. SEARCH FOR NANA SAHEB

B. HURJEEBHOY SUSPECTED AS NANA SAHEB

C APPA RAM, SIMILARLY SUSPECTED

D. JAMNA DAS

E. THE BABA OF SARAI MIRAN

F. KALI SADAN BABA OF NAIMISHARANYA

G. A LEGEND

A. SEARCH FOR NANA SAHEB

After the re-establishment of their authority, the British made strenuous efforts to apprehend the principal leaders of the revolt. The reprisals by the authorities against the civil population, the mutinous sepoys and others who assisted the rebels, were in addition to the capture and execution of those who were considered to be the leading offenders. Amongst the latter, no person was, in the eyes of the Government, a greater offender than Nana Saheb. They believed him to be guilty of the killings of Europeans at the Sattichaura Ghat, and later of English women and children at Bibighar in Kanpur. They were full of vengeance against the Nana and his family and left no stone unturned to get hold of him in Nepal through the good offices of the Nepalese Prime Minister, Maharaja Jang Bahadur. But though the latter was no friend of the Nana he would not blacken his hands by turning him over to the British who, he knew well, would never spare him. At the same time, Maharaja Jang Bahadur would not also like to displease the British. He, therefore, arranged things in such a way as to shield the Nana and at the same time to avoid the ill-will of the Government of India. He had it made out first that the Nana was suffering from a severe illness and later that he had died. With this story he surreptitiously suffered Nana Saheb to escape to a safer place within the jungles of Nepal.

Though the British raised no issue with the Nepal Darbar about the alleged death of Nana Saheb, they had strong suspicions that he had been allowed to escape and that he might possibly be hiding himself in some part of India in the guise of a faqir or mendicant. The Governor-General in Council had already announced a reward of one lakh of rupees to any person who gave information leading to the arrest of Nana Saheb. In addition to the monetary award, a free and unconditional pardon was also promised in case the person delivering up the Nana happened to be one who had taken part in the 'mutiny', even if he (barring a few specified exceptions) was guilty of the murder of Europeans. Nominal rolls of the Nana, his brothers and adherents, giving full particulars about their physical build and

appearance were published in various languages and widely circulated.

At different times several persons were arrested on suspicion of being the Nana. Elaborate enquiries were made to establish their identity, but in the end all of them were found to be spurious Nana Sahebs and were consequently released, the announced reward having never been claimed by any of the informants.

We shall here deal with three persons arrested at different dates on suspicion of being the Nana and about whom recorded proceedings exist in the archives of the Uttar Pradesh Government. These persons were, (1) Hurjeebhoy Brahmachari, arrested at Karachi, (2) Appa Ram, arrested at Ajmer and (3) Jamna Das (or Hunwanta, as he later called himself) arrested at Gwalior.

We shall also deal with the Baba of Sarai Miran and Kali Sadan Baba of Naimisharanya who were believed by the local people to be the Nana of Bithoor, but about whom the Government had taken no proceedings as the suspicions were no more than vague doubts on the part of the local population and the authorities had no reason to share those suspicions.

B. HURJEEBHOY SUSPECTED AS NANA SAHEB

There was an arrest at Karachi on November 30, 1861, of a person who finally gave his name as Hurjeebhoy Brahmachari. Along with him was also arrested a person who was thought to be his companion. They were arrested on their being suspected of being the Nana and his attendant who, according to the nominal roll, never left his side .

Enquiries for determining the identity of Hurjeebhoy were, under the directions of the Government of India, made by the Government of Bombay and the Government of Bengal. Several witnesses were examined. Eventually Hurjeebhoy's identity as being the Nana Saheb of Bithoor could not be established and he was, under the orders of the Government of India, released.

They were arrested on the report of an officer of the Customs Department at Karachi, by name Pedro De'Souza, a Roman Catholic Christian, serving as an appraiser in the Customs Office. His statement made on December 7, 1861, before the Deputy Magistrate of Karachi, describes how these persons came to be arrested :

"On Friday the 29th November at 3 p.m. I was in the Customs Office when two men who represented themselves as Brahmins landed from a cotlia which had arrived from Dwarka. The man with his cut ear had a bundle of beads in his hand. As the beads were not allowed to pass until it was ascertained whether they were dutiable or not, the two men were brought into the office. While coming into the office, the stout man told the peon he had come from Dwarka. The beads were taken to Mr. Dabjeell for orders and the two remained in the office.

I asked the stout man for his name. The first name he gave me was a Hindoo name, but the surname was a Mohammedan. I asked Mr. White if the man did not appear to be a suspicious character. I also alluded to the recent notices in the *Our Paper* regarding the Nana Saheb trying to pass through Karachi. Mr. White also thought the man a suspicious character. I then asked him to take out the descriptive rolls of the Nana and other mutineers. On reference thereto, Mr. White considered him to correspond with the description given of the Nana. Mr. Dabjeell having let the beads pass free, the stout man left the office first. Mr. Simson, the head clerk, was engaged in looking over the rolls when he noticed the remark that a servant with a cut ear never left the Nana's side, and as the second man passed, he saw that he had a cut in the ear. This confirmed our suspicions still further. The two men went away.

In the evening I told the Fouzdar that these two parties had passed through during the day, and said that I suspected one was the Nana Saheb, more especially with regard *to the man with the cut ear, who was along with him.*"

With regard to the reference to the "descriptive rolls" in the above statement it is to be explained that such rolls of persons who were believed to have taken part in the rebellion, but could not be found, were widely circulated by the Government and were available not only with the police authorities all over British India, but also with many other offices likely to come across any of those persons. The descriptive roll of Nana Saheb

and his family and attendant had likewise been circulated and was available with the Customs Office at Karachi. In that descriptive roll, Nana Saheb was described as follows :

Name ..	.. Nana Rao Dhondhoo Punt.
Caste ..	.. Dekhany Brahmin.
Age ..	.. 36 years in 1858.
Complexion	.. Fair.
Stature and personal appearance.	5 feet 8 inches ; powerful appearance and stout.
Form of face	.. Flat and round.
Form of nose	.. Straight and well-shaped.
Form of eyes	. Large round eyes.
Teeth ..	.. Regular.
Marks on breast	.. Covered with hair.
Colour of hair	.. Black.
Ring marks on ears ..	Yes.
Remarks	.. Has the features of a Maratha strongly depicted ; on one of his toes has a lancet mark, and at present by wearing a beard he presents a Mohamedan appearance. A servant with a cut-ear never leaves his side.

As soon as Pedro De'Souza's report was received by the police an immediate search for the two persons was instituted, but without success. The next morning the search was resumed and Hurjeebhoy was found in the market buying vegetables at about 9 a.m. He was arrested and shortly afterwards his companion was also arrested. Both had put up in a house in the vicinity of the market.

The police took these men before the Deputy Commissioner, Karachi who recorded their statements. After making certain enquiries and examining several witnesses who had given out that they had previously seen the Nana, he made a report to the Commissioner of Sind A report was then made to the Government of Bombay who submitted the matter to the Government of India. The conclusion of the Government of Bombay was that there was a suspicious resemblance between Hurjeebhoy and the Nana of Bithoor, but that Government were unable to come to a final conclusion on the point. They, therefore, asked for the instructions of the Government of India, suggesting that the persons might be sent to Kanpur in order that their identification may be satisfactorily determined. The Government of India approved the suggestion and arrangements were made for the prisoners being sent to Kanpur *via* Calcutta. (The headquarters of the Government of India were then at Calcutta.)

The Government of the North-Western Provinces were at the same time requested to have a searching enquiry made through the District Magistrate, Kanpur, about the identity of the prisoners with the help of the residents of Kanpur and Bithoor. At the same time, the Government of Bengal were requested by the Government of India that on the arrival of the prisoners at Calcutta arrangements may be made for sending them in safe custody to Kanpur. The prisoners arrived at Calcutta on May 14, 1862, and were taken into the custody of the Commissioner of Police, Calcutta. The Commissioner was going to make immediate arrangements for their safe transmission to Varanasi whence they were to be forwarded to Kanpur, but before this could be done the Commissioner, in circumstances which are not quite clear, took statements of four persons with regard to the identity of the prisoner Hurjeebhoy. They were definitely of the opinion that the prisoner was not the Nana of Bithoor.

The first of these witnesses was Hormasjee Mody, a resident of Calcutta, who stated that he had for long been employed under the Nana from July 7, 1852, till December 1855. He said that he had gone twice to England for the Nana and knew him intimately. Mody added : "the person shown to me is not the Nana and is not the least like him".

The second witness had been a bandsman in a regiment at Kanpur for three years up to 1856. He said that he had been frequently to Nana Saheb's house at Bithoor to play with the band at balls and parties. He said : "I think I should know the Nana by sight :

he was a stout man, dark complexion, long beard—he used to wear a ring in his ear, his caste was Maratha and he had a mark under the left eye. I have seen the man in the lock-up; I do not think he is the Nana. The Nana was a darker-complexioned man about the same size and make. This man has none of the gentle bearing of the Nana."

The third witness was Lala Ishwari Prasad who was a resident of Kanpur, but was at that time at Calcutta. He had occasion to see the Nana at Kanpur. He said that to his "eye" there was not the slightest resemblance between the prisoner and the Nana.

The last witness was Major R. C. Wroughton, Deputy Commissioner-General, Calcutta. He deposed : "I was at Kanpur from 1850 till August 1856. I have frequently seen the Nana. I was constantly a guest at his Bithoor house and visited him and his family frequently in his palace. The person shown to me is not the Nana, nor is he in the least like him. His mode of conversation and tone are not in the least similar."

The evidence taken by the Commissioner of Police was forwarded by the Government of Bengal to the Government of India and in the meanwhile the transmission of the prisoners to Kanpur was stayed.

On a perusal of the report of the Bengal Government, along with the statements of the witnesses the Governor-General in Council came to the conclusion that the testimony of the four persons, all of whom knew the Nana well and one of whom was Major Wroughton who had declared that there was no resemblance to the Nana, was amply sufficient to prove that the prisoner was not the Nana. The Governor-General accordingly asked the Bengal Government to send the man and his companion back to Bombay. Action was taken accordingly and Hurjeebhoy and his companion were eventually released. The Government of the North-Western Provinces were also informed.

C. APPA RAM

On June 22, 1863, were arrested at Ajmer three persons, the first being believed to be Nana Saheb, the second bore the name Narro Pant Bhatia Bhatt, the third a blind Brahman priest. These men were arrested by Major A. G. Davidson, Deputy Commissioner of Ajmer, under very peculiar circumstances.

On June 22, 1863, while Major Davidson was holding court a faqir came to him at 2.00 p.m. and wanted to speak to him privately on a matter of immediate importance. The visitor, on being taken to another room, told Major Davidson that he was an employee in the Secret Service, producing papers in proof, adding that he was in pursuit of Nana Saheb who had just arrived in Ajmer and was putting up with his party at a distance of 300 yards from the Kutchehry. Major Davidson, therefore, made arrangements for the arrest of the Nana and for this purpose obtained the assistance of the military. After some search, which was necessitated by the fact that the party of the suspects had in the meanwhile moved to another place of stay, the persons were arrested without resistance. They were kept in the Military Lines under the charge of an European guard.

In the morning Major Davidson got out the descriptive roll of the Nana, his family and his adherents and comparing it with the principal prisoner was struck by the resemblance. The Major had known of previous cases in which the alleged Nana had been captured and later released on being found to be a different man, yet he felt convinced that in the present instance he had got the real Nana, so striking was the resemblance in several particulars with the description of identification marks and other particulars as stated in the descriptive roll.

Major Davidson thereafter drew up a detailed report and forwarded copies to the

Government of the North-Western Provinces and other authorities.

This supposed Nana carried the name Appa Ram or Appaji Saheb. The blind priest with him was named Sundraj.

Major Davidson had also got the suspected Nana Saheb examined by the Civil Surgeon, Ajmer, who testified that the prisoner answered in nearly every particular to the published descriptive roll of the Nana. Another person by name Sergeant Major Wilkinson also recognised the prisoner, instantly on seeing him, as being the Nana. He said that he had seen the Nana previous to the 'mutiny' and had frequently spoken to him. He added that, though the suspect had very much changed in his appearance since he had seen him last, the form and style of his features were exactly those of the Nana.

The Government of the North-Western Provinces, on receipt of the report of Major Davidson, asked him to send a photograph of the Nana and, if possible, to send the prisoner to Kanpur for identification. The Local Government also informed the Government of India of the whole position.

After some intervening correspondence, the supposed Nana was brought to Kanpur on August 22 and put in custody at the District Jail. Under the orders of the Local Government, the District Magistrate of Kanpur made a detailed enquiry into the identity of the suspect and in that connexion took the evidence of Indian and European witnesses and the statement of the suspect himself.

In his statement the prisoner gave his name as Appa Ram, son of Damodar, born in the village of Neri near Ilichpur (then in Central Provinces--now Madhya Pradesh). He added that this village, which was situated by a river, had been washed away three years ago whereupon the inhabitants dispersed in the adjacent villages. He said that the men who used to know him when he visited the place six years ago had since all died, suggesting for that reason, that there was no point in making a reference about him to the District Officer, Ilichpur. The prisoner added that at the age of ten years he had been to Bithoor, but since then he had never been to Kanpur. He began a pilgrim's life at the age of twelve and had been continuing so since then. He gave his caste as Brahman

Of the witnesses, the most important was Dr. Cheke who had formerly been the Civil Surgeon of Kanpur (1849—1853) and had, in that capacity, been the medical adviser of the Nana before the 'mutiny'. At the time when his evidence was taken he was posted as Civil Surgeon, Varanasi, and was specially called to Kanpur to identify the prisoner. He deposed that the suspect was much older (at least fifteen years older) than the real Nana, darker and more common-looking. Before giving his evidence, he had medically examined the suspect and had come to the conclusion that the suspect could not be the real Nana.

The other European witnesses also stated that the prisoner did not answer their recollection of the Nana of Bithoor.

Of the Indian witnesses, several belonged to Bithoor and they knew the Nana very well. They also supported Dr. Cheke's view that the prisoner was much older than the Nana could have been and that in other particulars too the resemblance did not fit in.

Another witness was Noor Mohammad, the owner of the hotel in which Nana Saheb had stayed during the Kanpur revolt. He also failed to identify the prisoner as the real Nana. An equally important witness was Narayan Rao, the son of Ram Chandra Pant, Subedar to the late Peshwa Baji Rao, and he too averred that the prisoner was not the Nana. One or two witnesses, however, maintained, though with no show of certainty, that the prisoner was the Nana.

As a result of this enquiry the District Magistrate, Kanpur, came to the conclusion

that the prisoner was not the real Nana of Bithoor. He submitted a report to this effect to the Local Government. The District Magistrate added that he had written to the Deputy Commissioner of Ilichpur with a copy of the statement of the prisoner only to ascertain, if possible, whether what the prisoner had stated about him being a resident of Neri was correct. He had received no reply, but in view of the clear and conclusive evidence he saw no reason to postpone the submission of his report pending the receipt of a reply from Ilichpur.

The Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces was left in no doubt, after a perusal of the evidence taken by the District Magistrate, that the case was one of mistaken identity and that this conclusion was not affected by the fact that the statement of the prisoner had received no authentication from Ilichpur. The Lieutenant Governor, therefore, directed the release from custody of Appa Ram, the supposed Nana. This was in November 1863.

The prisoner was thereupon released from custody and the papers and other things which had been recovered from him at the time of his arrest were restored to him. Major Davidson, the Deputy Commissioner, was informed of the decision and of the release of the prisoner.

D. JAMNA DAS (or HUNWANTA)

This person, Jamna Das, was arrested in Gwalior in 1874 along with an attendant, Munshi Prem Raj. The circumstances of his arrest were peculiar. Shortly before this arrest, a rumour had gained currency in Gwalior that Nana Saheb, under disguise, was in the vicinity of Gwalior putting up in some jungle. Later, this man, according to the version of Maharaja Jiyaji Rao Scindhia of Gwalior, sent a letter to the Maharaja narrating his pitiable condition and seeking asylum and help from the Maharaja. Being an ally of the British, the Maharaja could not think of helping the Nana. In fact he could have no sympathy with the revolutionaries who, under the leadership of Rao Saheb, the Rani of Jhansi and Tatya Tope had driven him out of Gwalior in the course of the 'mutiny'. It was the British who later restored him to his gaddi and palace after driving out the insurgents. As a sort of repayment for this gratitude, the Maharaja thought of getting hold of this person and turning him over to the British. He, accordingly, marched with a party to the jungle and apprehended the Nana and his attendant, Munshi Prem Raj. The prisoners were then made over to the British Resident at Gwalior who had his seat in the Cantonment of Morar* near Gwalior.

Colonel Osborne, the Resident, made an enquiry into the identity of the prisoner (who now gave his name as Jamna Das) and examined several witnesses. In the result, a *prima facie* case appeared to be made out that the prisoner was the Nana.

However, before putting the man on a regular trial, the Government were advised that the identity of the prisoner be further established by his being sent to Kanpur where there would be many persons who had known the Nana and who could state with authority whether the suspect was the real person. Accordingly, he was sent to Kanpur where the District Magistrate, Mr. Daniell, held a thorough enquiry to establish the identity of the prisoner. He conducted elaborate proceedings in which he took the statement of the prisoner and the evidence of many witnesses—Indian and

* The Cantonment of Morar was in British territory, having been ceded by the Maharaja Scindhia by the treaty of December 2, 1871.

European—belonging to Bithoor, Kanpur and other places.

The District Magistrate, Kanpur, conducted the proceedings himself. He was assisted by Mr. Goad, the Superintendent of Police.

The prisoner gave his name as Hunwanta, a Maratha Kshattriya, born at Varanasi. At the age of 10 he went to Indore and became a faqir under the Raj Guru of the Maharaja Holkar. He made pilgrimages to holy places and also travelled to Assam. He said that three years prior to his arrest in 1874, he had left Assam on his way to Indore *via* Gwalior and while there, had been made over by the Maharaja Scindhia to the British authorities at Morar. He described the circumstances in which this occurred. He said that he was staying in the company of other faqirs at the dharmashala of Mahant Ayodhya Das who conducted worship at a temple which the Maharaja Scindhia used to visit. There he heard that the Maharaja was anxious to have a son born to him, and things were so arranged that it was told to the Maharaja that the prisoner could conduct prayers which might provide a son to him. Eventually, the prisoner was taken to the Maharaja's palace and there provided with meals and a good quantity of *bhang* which made him intoxicated. The next day he was put into a carriage which took him to Morar Cantonment where he was immediately taken into custody by the British officers.

This version of the prisoner about his arrest was doubted by the District Magistrate who felt that all the same the affair was shrouded in much obscurity.

At Kanpur, the prisoner was confined in the Cantonment under a Military guard and in the arrangements that were made for feeding him, precautions were taken to guard against chances of the prisoner committing suicide by swallowing poison.

The identification proceedings conducted by Mr. Daniell may now be briefly described. Mr. Daniell found that the difficulties inherent in the proper identification of the prisoner had been increased by the printing and sale in the bazar of Kanpur of a large number of photographs of the man. These had been so badly got up as to create an impression in the mind of every one that the prisoner was not the Nana. However, the Magistrate tried his best to prevent people from seeing the prisoner while in custody with the Military authorities.

Before the actual commencement of identification, Mr. Daniell and Mr. Goad spent the whole morning examining the witnesses, who had been brought from Bithoor, as to what they knew of the person of Nana Saheb; the circumstances under which, and the number of times, they had seen him; his appearance, physique, peculiarity of features and voice; personal marks, and so on.

The prisoner was then brought in a closed carriage from the Cantonment and taken without being seen by any one in a tent. Here he was shaved of his beard and made to look like a Hindustani. He was then re-dressed and made to sit with six other men similarly dressed in white and whom the District Magistrate had chosen from the city policemen for their general resemblance in appearance and size with the prisoner. All the seven men sat in a circle on a carpet. Then each witness was separately brought into the tent and asked to say who among them was the Nana. Mr. Daniell had taken such careful precautions in the matter that he regretted that in one small item there remained a special peculiarity in the prisoner which was not shared by the rest of the small assembly and this arose out of the prisoner having been freshly shaved—a circumstance which caused some attention to be attracted towards him.

The result of this identification is now described. The witnesses which Mr. Daniell had

selected for the identification of the prisoner were :

(1) Nana Narain Rao, son of Ram Chandra Pant, who was Peshwa Baji Rao's confidential adviser. On his father's death, Narain Rao had succeeded him as the Peshwa's vakil. After the Peshwa's death, Narain Rao was dismissed by Nana Saheb and this led to enmity between the two during the 'mutiny'. Narain Rao ran the risk of losing his life on this account.

(2) Srimati Adla. She was a prostitute, and it is said that she had associations with Nana Saheb.

(3) Kesho Ram Vaidya. He used to treat Nana Saheb for small ailments and had occasions to observe every part of his body.

(4) S. Shastri. He was the Peshwa's head-servant and remained in that office till Baji Rao's death.

(5) Jugal Kishore Jauhari. He was Nana Saheb's man of business and used to see him periodically for several years in connection with money-matters.

(6) Hormasjee Mody. He was a witness from Bombay. He said that he had several interviews with the Nana in connection with the mission which Nana Saheb had sent to England to plead his case for pension before the Home Government.

(7) Some other witnesses of a miscellaneous type.

All the witnesses failed after carefully examining the seven men to recognise the Nana Saheb in the prisoner. It was only Narain Rao who, after looking round the group for some time, pointed out to the prisoner and said : "I have doubts about this man." However, he examined the man again after the other witnesses had played their part, and admitted that the prisoner did not, in any particulars, agree with the description he had given of the Nana.

Afterwards, after each witness had given his verdict, he was confronted with the prisoner and asked to describe how the prisoner differed from the Nana. Each declared that the prisoner had no resemblance in form or feature to the Nana.

Srimati Adla was very distinct in her opinion and spoke contemptuously of such a man as the prisoner impersonating Nana Saheb.

On a careful consideration of the identification proceedings, the statements of the witnesses and all the connected circumstances, Mr. Daniell came to the definite conclusion that the prisoner was not the Nana ; this opinion was fully shared by Mr. Goad, the Superintendent of Police. Mr. Daniell was further of the opinion that the prisoner was an ignorant man in a low rank of life.

Mr. Daniell drew a report and sent the record of his proceedings to the Government of the North-Western Provinces who addressed the Government of India for the release of the prisoner.

The Government of India were, however, not prepared to take any risk in the matter and would not order the release of the prisoner on the basis of the proceedings of the District Magistrate, Kanpur. On the suggestion of the Advocate General with the Government of India, they entrusted the final investigation of the case to an officer of legal acumen and experience, Mr. D. Fitzpatrick Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Legislative Department. To assist Mr. Fitzpatrick, the Local Government of U. P. had deputed, at the request of the Government of India, Mr. H. Goad, District Superintendent of Police, Kanpur.

Mr. Fitzpatrick, after going through the evidence which was already on record and taking some further evidence, came to the definite conclusion that the prisoner was not the Nana and made a report to the Government of India accordingly.

The Government of India 'entirely' concurred in the conclusion of Mr. Fitzpatrick that

the man was not the Nana. In consequence of the orders of the Government of India proceedings against the prisoner were dropped at Kanpur.

The prisoner was, however, not released from custody, but was sent back to Gwalior under police escort to be made over to the Gwalior Darbar. This was done because the man had been arrested in Gwalior territory by the Maharaja Scindhia and had been made over to the British Government through the Political Agent at Gwalior. The Government of India having done with the prisoner, could have released him at Kanpur but for the fact that the Gwalior Darbar wanted him back. For this purpose the Darbar had taken extradition proceedings for getting the prisoner back from British territory. Accordingly, an extradition warrant had been issued by the Political Agent at Gwalior, which was received by the Government of the North-Western Provinces through the Government of India for execution by the District Magistrate of Kanpur. The prisoner was accordingly taken to Gwalior and made over to Colonel Osborne, the Political Agent, on January 21, 1875.

The report of the proceedings of Mr. Fitzpatrick contained in his letter to the Government in the Home Department, dated December 15, 1874,* was published in the Gazette of India dated January 2, 1875. With that letter was also published the order of the Government of India in which they had accepted the conclusion of Mr. Fitzpatrick. This order was contained in the letter of the Government of India addressed to Mr. Fitzpatrick, No. 1648, dated December 31, 1874. These two letters are reproduced below. Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter is an interesting statement of the circumstances in which he gave his decision that the arrested person was not the Nana Saheb.

Letter from Mr. D. Fitzpatrick, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Legislative Department, to Mr. Arthur Howell, officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, regarding the alleged Nana Dhondoo Pant of Bithoor, dated December 15, 1874.

"I have the honour to report that on the receipt of your No. 1393, dated 11th ultimo, I proceeded immediately to Cawnpore and subsequently went on to Gwalior with a view to investigating the case of Jumna Dass, the man supposed to be the Nana, and his attendant Pemraj.

2. As the charge against both the accused rested entirely on the allegation that the former was in fact the Nana Dhoondhoo Punt, it seemed clear that it was to the question of his identity with that person that I ought first to apply myself, and I accordingly at once entered upon it with the very able assistance of Mr. H. Goad, the police officer specially deputed by the Government of the North-Western Provinces in this matter.

3. The result of the enquiry we have made, shortly stated, is that the attempt to identify the prisoner Jumna Dass with the Nana has utterly failed and that in consequence I have felt it to be my duty to advise Mr. Goad to apply for the discharge of both the prisoners. This he did on the 10th instant, and his application was at once acceded to by the Magistrate (Mr. Clarmont Daniell).

4. As matters have turned out, there has been, contrary to what was at first apprehended, so little in the way of conflict in the evidence that I deem it unnecessary to trouble you with any minute discussion of it, and shall accordingly confine myself to the following brief remarks.

5. Not one of the witnesses examined has positively declared the man Jumna Dass to be the Nana. The nearest approach to an identification is to be found in the statements of the persons named in the margin.

Colonel Mowbray Thomson; Baba Aptleh; Unna Bhut; Dada Bhut.

6. The statement of Colonel Mowbray Thomson is of course above suspicion; but it must be remembered that, celebrated as Colonel Thomson's name is in connection with the Cawnpore rebellion, he appears to have seen the Nana but twice; and I may add that his recollection of that person was so faint in the year 1862 that he then wrote to the Magistrate of Cawnpore saying that he did not think he could recognise the Nana if put before him. This being so, it is no matter for surprise that Colonel Thomson should decline, as he does, to express any positive opinion.

7. The circumstance that Colonel Thomson found on the prisoner a mark which he had, before seeing him, stated that he would expect to find on the Nana would undoubtedly be one of great importance if the other evidence in the case left room for any doubt, but in the face

* Supplement to the Gazette of India, dated January 2, 1875, pages 63 *et seq.*

of the evidence to which I shall presently refer, it cannot be looked upon as anything more than an accidental coincidence.

8. Baba Aptieh, though he positively identified the prisoner as the Nana before Colonel Osborne, has since considerably modified his statement. He now can say no more than that the prisoner *appears to him* to be the Nana, and he explains his former positive assertion by saying that he saw the prisoner only from a distance and was ill at the time.

9. Unna Bhut has completely withdrawn the positive statement he made before Colonel Osborne. He now goes no farther than to say that the prisoner is *like* the Nana, particularly about the forehead.

10. As for Dada Bhut, he clearly desires to convey the impression that he believes the prisoner to be the Nana, but all attempts to get a direct statement from him on the point have failed. For reasons with which it is unnecessary to trouble you here, I regard the evidence of this witness with much suspicion.

11. Any account of the evidence bearing in favour of the identity, would be incomplete if it omitted to notice the so-called identification by the Maharaja Scindhia which has been so much dwelt on, especially in the newspapers; but the truth is His Highness has never professed to recognise the prisoner as the Nana. All he has said amounts only to this, that from the knowledge displayed by the prisoner of the circumstances of an interview which took place between the Nana and the Maharaja before the mutiny of 1857 and in particular from the prisoner's being aware that a sword of a peculiar description (termed a "Sosun putta") was presented to the Nana at that interview, he "infers that the prisoner *must* be" the Nana. But such facts, though useful auxiliaries to other evidence leading the same way, do not of themselves warrant the inference drawn. The circumstance of a sword of the description referred to having been presented must of necessity have been known to several persons besides the Nana, and any one designing to personate the Nana would have little difficulty in obtaining a knowledge of it.

12. I may add that since an interview he had with the prisoner in our presence on the first instant, at a time when the case was much more developed, the Maharaja has been much shaken and seems to admit that he was misled.

13. In concluding my remarks on this part of the case, I ought to mention that two witnesses named Roshun Khan and Mahomed Mookeem examined by Colonel Osborne, and who may be termed witnesses in favour of the identity, were unfortunately forgotten when we were at Gwalior, and we accordingly had not the advantage of hearing their statements from their own mouths; but as neither of them professed actually to identify the prisoner as the Nana, it did not, seeing the absolutely conclusive nature of the other evidence, seem worthwhile to delay the application for discharge by sending for them to Cawnpore.

14. Such is the evidence that might be adduced in favour of the identity. Against it we have the evidence of twenty-seven witnesses named in the margin, almost all of whom seem highly competent to speak on the point.

J. N. Tresidder, Deputy Surgeon General, John Power, Judge of Moradabad, Musammat Adla, Suddack Wrestler, Nana Narain Rao, Mundey Gunga Poote, Kesho Rae Baid, Cheddie Mistree, Sadasheo Shastree, Jogul Kishore, Hoormusjee Bazoon Moodi, Jewan Singh, Hillalloodeen, Noor Mohummud, Deen Mohummud, Ruggoonundun Sehae, Ram Newaz, Luchmun Singh, Buldeo Singh Resaldar, Gunput Rao, Ram Chand, Dada Bhut, Ruggonath Rao, Govind Pundit, Ruggonath, son of Balkishen, Dada Mahajun, Buldeo Singh, son of Esaree Singh.

Some of these witnesses say the prisoner is like the Nana, but all agree in declaring most positively that he is not the man.

We considered the evidence of the first eighteen of these witnesses amply sufficient. The remaining nine were subsequently examined at the request of the Maharaja.

15. The conclusion at which I have arrived on the evidence of these witnesses is strongly confirmed by the circumstance that, while the Nana ought now to be over 50 years of age, the prisoner is, in the opinion of Dr. Norman Chevers and the other medical officers who have examined him, not more than about thirty-five, forty-five being the utmost limit which any of them thinks it within the range of possibility that he could have attained.

16. This conclusion is further confirmed by the following circumstances:

Firstly: That the Nana is clearly shown to have worn an ear-ring of the description termed *bhik balee* which the medical officers are unanimously of opinion must have left a mark in the upper rim of his ear, while no trace of such a mark can, on the most minute examination with lenses, be detected on the prisoner.

Secondly: That Kesho Rae Baid states that the Nana had sustained a considerable loss of tissue by sloughing from a virulent disease, while the prisoner shows no sign of having suffered in this way.

17. Finally, notwithstanding what has been said by some persons to the contrary, the prisoner's entire appearance, bearing and mode of speaking are unmistakeably those of a person of a very low rank of life. I myself was quite startled on first going into his cell at finding the sort of person I had before me, and I subsequently observed the same effect produced on General Daly when he first saw him. Mr. Goad, who is as competent to form an opinion on a matter of this sort as a native would be, assured me that from the first moment he met the prisoner on his way up from Gwalior he felt satisfied that he could not

be the man: I may add that Mr. Goad judged from his accent that he was a native of the country about Benares, and this he has since declared himself to be.

18. Under the circumstances, I have deemed it unnecessary, for the purposes of the question we are now considering, to institute any special enquiry as to the Marathi signature affixed to the letter which the prisoner sent to the Maharaja; but I may mention that Nana Narain Rao, when shown that signature, stated without one moment's hesitation that it was not the handwriting of the Nana; and indeed any person can see for himself that it is altogether of a different character from the signatures of the Nana on the Government Promissory Notes produced from the Loan Department. The prisoner, I may add, states that he can neither read nor write the Marathi character.

19. In conclusion, I have only to say that the prisoner (Jumna Dass) has entirely withdrawn the statement he originally made before Colonel Osborne, and has given us a detailed history of his life which he describes as having been from his eleventh year that of a wandering fakeer of the most ordinary description.

I await the instructions of the Governor General in Council as to any further enquiries regarding him that it may be deemed advisable to make."

Letter No. 1648, dated Fort William, the 31st December, 1874, from Mr. Arthur Howell, officiating Secretary to the Government of India, to Mr. D. Fitzpatrick, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Legislative Department.

"I am directed to acknowledge your letter of the 15th instant, reporting the result of your investigation into the case of the man arrested at Gwalior as the Nana Doondhoo Punt of Bithoor, and of Pemraj, his attendant.

2. The Government of India entirely concur in your conclusion that the man is not the Nana.

3. The report of your proceedings will be published in the Gazette of India for general information. And I am desired to convey to you the thanks of the Government of India for the care you have taken in conducting the investigation. I am further to acknowledge the services rendered by the officers attached to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, particularly Mr. C. Daniell, Magistrate of Cawnpore, and Mr. H. B. Goad, District Superintendent of Police, and also of Dr. Chevers who was specially deputed from Calcutta to aid you in your enquiries.

4. Instructions will be given as to the disposal of the prisoner as soon as the Government of India receive a reply to a communication which they have addressed to His Highness the Maharaja Scindhia upon the subject."

E. THE BABA OF SARAI MIRAN

About three miles from Sarai Miran, near Kannauj in the Farrukhabad district, there is an old temple of Lord Vishwanath situated on a high mound on the bank of the Ganga. The place was said to be haunted. Then came a sanyasi who made enquiries about the temple and the mound. On being told that it was haunted, he immediately took one or two men with him and went to the mound. The temple itself was in a neglected state and so was an old well near it. The sanyasi said that he would not take a drop of water until the temple and the well were cleaned. His desire was soon complied with by the villagers, and the sanyasi took up his residence there. Later, he got the temple repaired and had marble fixed on its floor. No body knew from where he got the money. He used to leave the mound only once in the day for going to the Ganga for bath. He decorated the idol in the temple with great devotion and used to apply scent to it.

This sanyasi was believed by the local people to be Nana Saheb Peshwa. After a stay of many years, he left the place in great remorse on the ground that he had given false evidence in a murder case which had occurred in Sarai Miran.

The Baba had acquired fame in the district of Farrukhabad, particularly in the locality of Kannauj. The people of Sarai Miran used to go regularly to the Vishwanath temple to have his *darshan* and blessings. He was believed to possess mysterious powers and people used to benefit by his blessings.

The murder case in Sarai Miran had caused a great sensation in the Farrukhabad district because the parties involved were well-to-do and well-known persons. The victim was a small boy, and the son of one of the two brothers who were living in separate houses in Sarai Miran. The investigation made by the Police showed that the two brothers were not on good terms although outward relations were maintained and the women-folk of the two houses used to meet on festive occasions. One day, festivities

were going on in the house of one of the brothers and the ladies and the children of the other brother were also there. This boy, along with other children, was playing outside the house and no body took notice of them until the afternoon. When the mother of the boy was ready to leave, it was found that the boy was missing. A frantic search was made, but to no purpose. Suspicions against his uncle were, however, roused.

In the meanwhile, the uncle had gone to the Baba and told him that he had murdered the boy and thrown his body in a well at a small distance from his house. He felt remorseful for what he had done. The Baba told him that though he had done a most foul deed, he would protect him in view of his repentance. He then came back to his house. Later, the victim's father also went to the Baba and told him all about his misfortune in the hope that the sanyasi, who knew astrology also, might be able to give some clue about the boy. The Baba comforted him and told him what had happened and advised him not to institute a case against his brother.

Eventually, however, a case was started. The prisoner took the plea that he was at the Vishwanath temple at the time the murder was said to have been committed. As the Baba was greatly respected even in official circles, the case hinged on what he had to say. The Baba, having already given his word of protection to the prisoner, deposed that the prisoner had been with him for quite a long time in the Vishwanath temple. This meant that the prisoner could not have been present in Sarai Miran at or near about the time the murder was committed. The time of the murder had been previously ascertained by the police from the evidence of witnesses who had deposed that at about a certain specified hour they had heard a sound resembling that caused by the throwing of a heavy object in the well from which the body of the victim had been taken out. The court believing the statement of the Baba acquitted the accused.

As the people of the locality did in fact believe that the murder had been committed by the boy's uncle and that the Baba had given false evidence on oath, the sanyasi became very dejected. He told some of his confidants that he had to make *prayashchitta* for the sin of having given false evidence and that he was going to leave the Vishwanath temple. So saying he quietly left the place. It was believed that he had gone to Naimisharanya.

Sri Amrit Lal Nagar, in his book *Gadar Ke Phool* (pp. 165—168), has given the above account based largely on what he learnt from Sri Balbhadra Prasad Misra, Deputy Director of Information, Utttar Pradesh Government, and whose home is in Sarai Miran. Sri Misra, on his own part, had heard the account from his grand-father, Pandit Medai Lal Misra who in his time was a big zamindar and a person of great piety and truthfulness, respected by one and all. He used to pay occasional visits to the Baba and had heard from the lips of the Baba himself the incident above described.

The question whether this Sanyasi Baba was the Nana Saheb of Bithoor was never investigated nor enquiries about its authenticity made by the police of the district. The mere belief of the local population that he was Nana Saheb cannot, however, by itself be taken on its face value. The identity of this sanyasi as Nana Saheb is thus no more than a remote possibility.

It is also said that this Sanyasi Baba was the very person who later lived in Naimisharanya and who was known there as Kailashan Baba or Kali Sadan Baba. There too he was believed by some people to be the Nana of Bithoor.

F. KAILASHAN BABA OF NAIMISHARANYA

Another version is that for a number of years Nana Saheb lived at Naimisharanya in the guise of a sadhu under the assumed name of Kailashan Baba or Kali Sadan Baba. This Kailashan Baba had come to Naimisharanya about 1885-86 and stayed at Janki Kund. There is in Naimisharanya an ancient temple of Lalita Devi with a beautiful marble floor. This marble was laid by Kailashan Baba. He also built the Kalika Devi temple and a Shiva temple at a place 10 miles from Naimisharanya. He did not raise local subscriptions for either of these works. The temple of Kalika Devi could not, however, be completed because Baba Kailashan either left Naimisharanya or died. He used to pay the mazdoors on every Friday and whenever he was short of funds he used to go inside the jungle for getting money. After he had left Janki Kund several persons made diggings in the jungle, but found no treasure. It is also said that he used to carry a stick in which precious stones were secreted. He used to distribute a lot of sweets and money to the local people, particularly children, at Janki Kund.

No body knew exactly from where Kailashan Baba had come. The local people believed that he was the Raja of some place and had come from Poona. He did not mix with local people. Some used to say that he was a relation of Nana Saheb and of Peshwa Baji Rao of Bithoor. Others said that he was Nana Saheb himself. Some people had also heard that he was an absconder of the mutiny.

Kailashan Baba had one attendant who used to cook his food. The Baba was described as a person of ordinary height, of wheat complexion, long white hair and beard. He used to wear white clothes.

After staying at Janki Kund for some three years, he went to a place called Kailashan on the bank of the Gomati, about 10 miles from Naimisharanya. It is said that he died at Kailashan in the month of Kartik, two days after the full moon. He stayed in Naimisharanya (Janki Kund and Kailashan) for about 20 years.

The above account has been compiled from the statements of several old people who had been interviewed in December, 1954, by a Research Officer of the Committee on the History of Freedom Movement set up by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

G. A LEGEND

There is also a belief that Nana Saheb spent his last days in Gujarat. Several stories are prevalent in this connection. Some say that he lived in a temple in the jungle near Shihore in disguise.

The story goes that it was the custom of Nana Saheb to perform the annual *shraddh* of his forefathers at Rajkot or some town on a fixed date every year, but the house at which he performed the ceremony changed from year to year. In one year he came, riding on horse-back, to the house of one Vaishampayan Upadhyaya, a priest, at noon time and with his permission and help performed the *shraddh* in his house. In the course of the ceremony the priest was astounded to find that the names of his (Nana Saheb's) forefathers which he had pronounced during the ceremony were those of the Peshwas of Poona. However, the priest said nothing at the time, and after finishing the ceremony the gentleman rode away.

Soon the news went round that on a specific day every year Nana Saheb comes to the city to perform the *shraddh* of his ancestors. On hearing of it the Government began to think of capturing the Nana and for this purpose made it known that any one who helped in his apprehension would receive a large reward. Next year Nana Saheb went to the

house of another priest and asked him to arrange for the performance of the rites, to which the priest agreed. Nana Saheb went away promising to come soon afterwards, but in the meanwhile the priest carried the information to the local British officer. The officer asked the priest to arrange for the performance of the *shraddh* on the first storey of his house. He also undertook to provide five Brahmans to be fed on the occasion by Nana Saheb. Arrangements were made by the priest accordingly. As Nana Saheb was awaiting the arrival of the Brahmans, he saw five men robed in silken dress coming towards the house, walking in the style of soldiers. He at once understood the foul play by which these European soldiers had been dressed like Brahmans. Putting on his clothes and sword, he asked that the Brahmans be sent up-stairs. They were then made to sit at their proper places, and after some items of the ritual had been gone through, Nana Saheb asked them to touch their eyes with water and then close them. When they did so, he went behind them and hit the disguised soldiers with his sword.* Whether some of them were killed and some ran away is not known, but they could not secure him. Nana Saheb then told the priest never in future to act as a traitor. So saying he jumped on his horse and disappeared.†

* Another version is that after the spurious Brahmans had closed their eyes, Nana Saheb quickly left the place.

†*San* 1857 *Ki Chingariyan* by Shrinivas Balaji Hardikar of Kanpur, pp. 54-55.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

TRIAL AND DEATH OF TATYA TOPE

A. EARLY LIFE AND ROLE IN REBELLION

B. CAPTURE AND COURT-MARTIAL

C. HIS DEATH

D. THE PERSON HANGED : WAS HE THE REAL TATYA TOPE ?

E. ESTIMATE OF TATYA TOPE

F. MEMORIALS TO TATYA TOPE

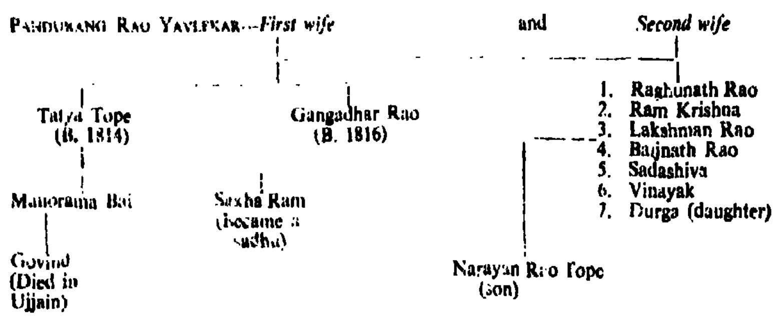
ANNEXURE I : T. RICE HOLMES' ACCOUNT OF TATYA TOPE'S CAPTURE.

ANNEXURE II : STATEMENT OF TATYA TOPE.

मुझे तोड़ कर ऐ बनमाली ! उस पथ पर तुम देना फेंक,
मातृ भूमि पर शीश चढ़ाने, जिस पथ जावें वीर अनेक।*
—माखन लाल चतुर्वेदी

A. EARLY LIFE AND ROLE IN REBELLION

Geneology



* *The wish of a flower:*

Pluck me gardener, pluck me dear!
And on that sacred path do throw,
Patriots bold with conscience clear,
To die for country's sake do go.

NOTE—*Tatya Tope's original name was Ram Chandra Pandurang Rao, but it gave place to the popular name Tatya Tope, mis-spelt as Tantya or Tantiya Topi. This mis-spelling occurs in Government documents and records of the time and has thus crept in books, including Dr. Sen's* Eighteen Fifty-Seven. *In Marathi language the word* Tatya *is expressive of affection, and this was his house-hold name. Later, the word Tope was added on account of the fact that Peshwa Baji Rao had presented to him a costly cap* (topee) *of rare design and which he greatly valued. Another version is that this surname was given to him because he had for some time served as an artillery-man in a British* Top-khana.

Tatya Tope was born in Maharashtra in a Deshashtha Brahman family as one of the eight sons of Pandurang Rao Bhatt (or Yavlekar). His year of birth has been variously put at 1812, 1814 and 1816, but greater reliance is being placed on the second mentioned year.

Pandurang Rao Bhatt was an employee in the household staff of the last Peshwa Baji Rao. He was amongst the numerous adherents who followed the deposed monarch to Bithoor in 1818. At that time Tatya Tope was a small child of about four years. Little is known of his early life save that he was possibly a playmate of Nana Saheb and that he was held in affection by Baji Rao under whose general supervision he grew up.

Tatya Tope had from childhood a martial bent of mind and learnt the use of the sword and the gun and was a good horseman. It is said that for a time he served under the East India Company in an artillery regiment of the Bengal Army. He could not, however, carry on in a mercenary army for long because of his temperamental independence and organising capacity—qualities which were rather a disqualification for an Indian sepoy of the British army. He was eventually taken in the household staff of Maharaja Baji Rao to whom he was greatly attached.

On the death of Baji Rao, Tatya Tope became the Manager of Nana Saheb. In that capacity he must have come in contact with the European officers and their ladies who used to visit Nana Saheb at Bithoor frequently. He must have been quite popular among them and this provides a circumstance to European ladies having silently prayed for him when he was being hanged at Sipree.

Tatya Tope was a well-built young man of medium height. His large and penetrating eyes were set in a dark-coloured face with marks of small-pox. John Lang, who had seen him at Bithoor, describes him thus : "He was a man of about the middle height—say, five feet high—rather slightly made, but very erect. He was far from good-looking. The forehead was low, the nose rather broad at the nostrils, and his teeth irregular and discoloured. His eyes were expressive and full of cunning like those of most Asiatics ; but he did not strike me as a man of eminent ability."*

His knowledge of Marathi, Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati was good, but in English he could only sign his name. He was reticent in speech and usually answered questions by a simple yes or no.

Role in rebellion

Tatya Tope joined the rebellion after Nana Saheb had been chosen by the sepoys as their leader. He was present at the siege of the entrenchment and later played an important part in the battles for the defence of Kanpur which were fought with General Havelock's force advancing from Allahabad. In the final battle fought on July 16, the defence

**Wanderings in India*, pp. 410-11.

forces led by Rao Saheb, Tatya Tope, Brigadier Jwala Prasad, Bala Rao and General Tika Singh were defeated. Tatya Tope and other commanders then made their way to Avadh. Soon, however, Tatya Tope reorganised his forces and established himself at Bithoor with the idea of capturing Kanpur. At this time General Havelock, who after the recapture of Kanpur had proceeded to Lucknow, returned to Kanpur and on August 16 attacked Tatya Tope's force at Bithoor. Though his troops fought bravely, victory went to the British.

Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb then made their way to Gwalior where they won over the famous Gwalior Contingent to their side. From there they came and established their headquarters at Kalpi. In November 1857, Tatya Tope came down to Kanpur again with a large force and defeated Major General Windham who was commanding Kanpur. Windham's troops were routed and took shelter in the entrenchment. The revolutionaries were now in the possession of the town. This victory too was short-lived for Tatya Tope's force was defeated on December 6 by Sir Colin Campbell, the Commander-in-Chief, who now arrived from Lucknow to the assistance of Windham. Tatya Tope then proceeded to Charkhari and obtained possession of the town.

In the meanwhile Jhansi had been surrounded by British troops under Sir Hugh Rose. On becoming aware of this Tatya Tope proceeded to the Rani's assistance, but his army, though large, could not stand the tactical moves of the seasoned General and Tatya Tope had to retreat. Thereafter a great battle at Koneh was again fought by him against Sir Hugh Rose. Here also Tatya Tope was routed whereupon he proceeded towards Gwalior. In the way he was joined by Rao Saheb and Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi who after the fall of Jhansi had to leave her fort. Their combined forces then attacked the city and the fort of Gwalior. Maharaja Jiyaji Rao Scindhia could not stand the attack and flew for his life to Agra where he placed himself under British protection. At Gwalior, Rao Saheb was proclaimed Peshwa in place of Nana Saheb who had now taken to some unknown place.

On June 16, 1858, Sir Hugh Rose arrived in front of Gwalior. In the battles that followed the Rani of Jhansi was severely wounded and died shortly afterwards. The field was then lost and Tatya Tope and Rao Saheb had now to leave Gwalior. After some days they again fought an action against the British at Zora Alipur where the revolutionaries were almost completely done up. A large quantity of fighting material fell into the hands of the British.

Tatya Tope was now greatly weakened in men and resources and adopted guerilla warfare and fought many actions against the British. His capabilities as a guerilla leader have been universally recognised and he is reckoned amongst the outstanding leaders of the world in this kind of warfare. He could not, however, re-establish himself anywhere. At the same time the British forces which were in hot pursuit of him were out-witted for almost a whole year. His daring, initiative, counter-strokes and miraculous escapes baffled all the English commanders who were pursuing him from place to place.

B. CAPTURE AND COURT-MARTIAL

Tatya Tope's last battle with the British took place on January 21, 1859, at Sikar in Rajputana where he was completely defeated by Colonel Holmes. After this, Rao Saheb and Firoz Shah, who had been with him so long, left him. With a few followers he now took shelter in the Paron jungle in the territory of his friend Raja Man Singh, the chieftain of Narwar in the Gwalior State. He lived in hiding until April of the same year when he was captured by the British with the assistance of Raja Man Singh.

According to Tatya Tope's statement before the court-martial, Man Singh had been seeing him off and on regarding their future course of action. Man Singh had taken no part in the 'mutiny', but had rebelled against his master, the Scindhia, who had deprived him of his estate. Hoping to get assistance from the British in recovering his lands, Man Singh, who had so long been wandering in the jungles, had now surrendered himself to Major Meade; this he did after consulting Tatya Tope. Thereafter some further consultations between the two took place and it was decided that the next meeting would take place after three days. On the appointed night Man Singh came again and this is what happened according to Tatya Tope's statement: "He (Man Singh) came accordingly on the night of the third day and spoke a great deal to me and told me that he had met Major Meade and that his disposition was good. When I asked him what he advised—whether I should go or remain—he said he would reply in the morning. I then went to sleep and during the night some of the sepoys of the Government came and seized me and took me to Major Meade's camp."

Describing the capture, Major Meade says that Man Singh himself assisted in Tatya Tope being caught and bound When Tatya Tope had fallen asleep after midnight (till which hour Man Singh had been in conversation with him) "the *sipahees* were then fetched by Man Singh and Tatya Tope was secured and pinioned, his arms being seized by Man Singh himself; unfortunately during the confusion two pandits, who had been with him, managed to escape on horseback".

A vivid account of the circumstances which led Man Singh to betray Tatya Tope has been given by T. Rice Holmes in *A History of the Indian Mutiny*. It is reproduced in *Annexure I* at the end of this chapter.

At the time of his capture the following property was taken from Tatya Tope: One horse, one sword, one *kukri*, three gold armlets, one copper armlet and 118 gold mohars.

After having turned over Tatya Tope to Major Meade, Man Singh asked that the gold mohars be given to those of his men who had been despatched to track Tatya Tope as he had promised to give them the money if they were successful. After obtaining higher sanction, Major Meade made over 97 mohars to Man Singh, retaining 21 for distribution amongst the party of his own men who had assisted in the capture.

The Trial

In anticipation of the capture of Tatya Tope the Governor General had passed orders in October 1858 that on being caught he should be tried by court-martial. On receipt of the report about the capture the Government of India re-affirmed the original order saying, "Let the trial of Tatya Tope by court-martial at Goona proceed, and let the sentence be carried out".*

A court-martial consisting of Captain Vaugh, President, four Members and a Judge Advocate-General, all Europeans, was constituted by the order of Major Meade, commanding at Sipree.† Tatya Tope was charged under Act No. XIV of 1857 which provided for the trial and sentence of persons accused of having been in rebellion and having waged war against the British Government and which also contained provisions for the constitution of courts-martial for the trial of offences under it.

The court-martial assembled at Sipree (now in Madhya Pradesh) on April 15, 1859, in an officer's bungalow.

* Foreign Political Proceedings, 26-4-1859, Consultations Nos. 155–166, National Archives, New Delhi.

† Shivpuri is the traditional name of the place

Tatya Tope, who was described in the proceedings as "a resident of Bithoor in the district of Kanpur in the territory of British India and in the service of the late *ex*-Peshwa Bajee Rao, a pensioner of the British Government", was brought before the court. The order appointing the court-martial, with names of the President and Members, was read out and the prisoner was asked whether he objected to be tried by the court as constituted to which a reply was given in the negative.

The President, Members and Judge Advocate-General were then sworn in and the following charge was read out :

"*Charged*—with having been in rebellion and having waged war against the British Government between June 1857 and December 1858, and having especially been leader of, and present with, the Rebel Army which fought against the British Force under Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K. C. B., near Jhansi on or about the 1st April 1858, and also one of the leaders of, and present with, the Rebel Army which having attacked and defeated Maharaja Scindhia near Gwalior on or about 1st of June, 1858, occupied Gwalior, and subsequently fought, at or near Gwalior, against the British Force under the same Major-General Sir Hugh Rose, K. C. B., between 19th and 21st June, 1858.

R. MEADE, Major,
Commanding
Field Force."

Camp, Sipree
13th April, 1859.

He was asked whether he pleaded guilty or not. "Not guilty" was the reply.

A number of witnesses for the prosecution were examined. Almost all of them identified the accused as being no other than Tatya Tope. They also deposed that they had seen him at this place or that place, commanding the rebel army and attacking the British force. Thus, one of the witnesses said that he had seen Tatya Tope about a year ago at Jhansi commanding the rebel army and attacking the English troops who had besieged the Rani of Jhansi. Another witness deposed that he had seen him near Maharaja Scindhia's palace at Gwalior where he was addressing the people telling them that he would take care of them, that the Gwalior troops would now be commanded by him instead of by the Maharaja Scindhia.

Tatya Tope had no counsel to defend him. At the close of the examination of each prosecution witness, Tatya Tope was asked whether he wanted to put any question to the witness by way of cross-examination. He declined to do so except in two cases. He produced no defence evidence either.

After the witnesses had been examined the original document in Urdu purporting to be a statement or confession said to have been dictated by the accused on April 10, 1859, was produced and proved. It had two signatures of Tatya Tope, also the signature of the person who had taken down the dictation, the signature of a witness and the signature of Major Meade. The writer of the original document was Munshi Ganga Prasad. He deposed that the statement had been dictated to him by prisoner Tatya Tope and taken down from his own lips. He added that the statement had been made by the own free will of the prisoner who had been repeatedly asked if such was the case.

This document had been translated into English by Lt. Gibbon, interpreter to the Court, who deposed that he was present on the previous day when in the morning the contents of the original document in Urdu were read over to Tatya Tope by Munshi Ganga Prasad in the presence of Major Meade. He added that the prisoner had stated that the document was "in all respects perfectly correct and that it had been dictated by his own free will and accord". He

concluded by saying that he had made a careful translation into English of the original document.

In that statement Tatya Tope had given his name, the name of his father, the place of his residence, his age and his profession. He then proceeded to narrate the events leading to the uprising at Kanpur and the part taken in it by Nana Saheb and himself. He went on to say that after the defeat of the rebel army by General Havelock's force, which had arrived from Allahabad, the Nana Saheb, along with Bala Saheb, Rao Saheb and himself, with all their wives, crossed the Ganga at Bithoor and landed on the other side near Fatehpur Chaurasi in Avadh territory.

He then described how after some time the rebel forces were re-collected, and with the help of the Gwalior Contingent, which had joined the rebels, the British were attacked at Kanpur. The rebels were, however, defeated and had to flee.

After describing the other battles which took place between the nationalist armies and the British at various places and some connected incidents, he concluded how he separated from the army of Rao Saheb and came to the Paron jungle where he met Raja Man Singh. He explained that he had quarrelled with Rao Saheb in the course of which he had told the latter that he could flee no longer and that he would leave him as soon as possible. He accordingly left Rao Saheb who had a force of about six thousand with him. Tatya Tope took with him three men, two to cook his food and one groom, three horses and a pony, but the groom ran away after marching two stages.

He then briefly described how he had been captured during his sleep in the night and brought to Major Meade's camp.

He also avowed that he had nothing to do with the murder of any European men, women, or children, neither had he at any time given orders for any one to be hanged. On this point it is important to state that the charge itself did not include any allegation that he had taken part or assisted in the murder of Europeans or others.

Extracts from this statement of Tatya Tope have been given in *Annexure II* to this chapter.

The proceedings had started in the morning of April 15 and in a hurried judgment pronounced the same evening the court found him guilty of the charge. He was sentenced to death.

C. HIS DEATH

Immediately on the pronouncement of the sentence Tatya Tope was carried off to the fort of Sipree where he remained for three days before he was executed on April 18 in the evening in the presence of a large assemblage. As in life, so on the approach of death, Tatya Tope was fearless ; indeed, it is recorded that during these three days he waited impatiently for death. On one day he once expressed a hope that Government would provide for his old father and his family and not punish them for what he had done, because they had nothing to do with his actions.

At 5 o'clock in the evening of the 18th he was brought out of the fort to the place of execution. A company of British soldiers was guarding him. The gallows stood in the centre of a hollow square round which the troops of the station were drawn up. The onlookers covered every spot from which the execution could be seen.

For some reason a delay of some 20 minutes had occurred in bringing the great hero to the spot. On his arrival, Major Meade read out the charge, the finding of the court and the sentence. No sooner had he finished than the fetters were taken off the legs of Tatya Tope who then, with a firm step, mounted the ladder on to the platform. He was pinioned

and tied. Then like a true hero he thrust his head of his own accord into the noose. The bolt was drawn and after a slight struggle* the great soul left its mortal remains.

It is said that Tatya Tope ascended the gallows with a serene countenance to meet death with a hopeful expression. English women present in the gathering folded their arms in silent prayer.

After the execution, his hair were reverently collected by English ladies** who had been his admirers. These are still preserved in a London Museum and were seen some years ago by Sri Som Narayan Sinha, a political worker of Kanpur during his visit to England.

No sooner had the troops left the place than many amongst the spectators rushed to touch the feet of the great martyr before returning grief-stricken to their homes.

Preserved in London in the Royal United Service Museum is also the uniform which the great hero used to wear. It is an *achkan* made of black woollen material, embroidered in gold and silver and carries this description : "Coat of the Indian rebel leader, Tantia Topi, who was hanged on the 18th April, 1859".

An army officer is also said to have drawn a small pencil sketch of Tatya Tope just before the execution This drawing is reproduced in Dr. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-seven*, and faces page 137. In the table of contents it has been described as "From a contemporary sketch by Lt. Baugh".

He was unjustly put to death

Serious doubts were expressed about the legality and justice of Tatya Tope's execution. Not being in the service of the Company's army, he could not be treated as a "mutineer". He was also not a "rebel" because during the life-time of Peshwa Baji Rao he was the latter's subject and not a British subject--the adherents of Baji Rao, and he was one of them, were exempt from the jurisdiction of the Company's courts. He was a loyal soldier of the family of the Peshwa and fought for the liberation of his country. As he was not a British subject he could not legally have been charged with the crime of raising an army against the Company in the capacity of a British subject. On capture, he was thus a "prisoner of war" and should have been treated as such. He had no hand in the murder of the Europeans either at Sattichaura Ghat or at Bibighar. In fact no such charge was framed against him nor was any evidence led to that effect. Viewed in this light Tatya Tope's execution was illegal and amounted to a "judicial murder".

A British historian, G. A. Furse, in his book, *The Art of Marching*, has thus commented on the event : "With very good reason, the justice of the sentence has been questioned inasmuch as for the majority of the population the rising of 1857 was a national contest and not a rebellion.

Colonel G. B. Malleson in his *History of the Mutiny* has also expressed himself against the validity of the sentence. He writes : "Public opinion at the time ratified the justice of the sentence, but it may, I think, be doubted whether posterity will confirm that verdict. Tatya Tope was not a born servant of the British rule. At the time of his birth, i.e. about 1812, his master was the independent ruler of a large portion of Western India. He was under no obligation to serve faithfully and truly the race which had robbed his master ; and when the master, unbound equally by any tie to the English, saw the opportunity of recovering the territories

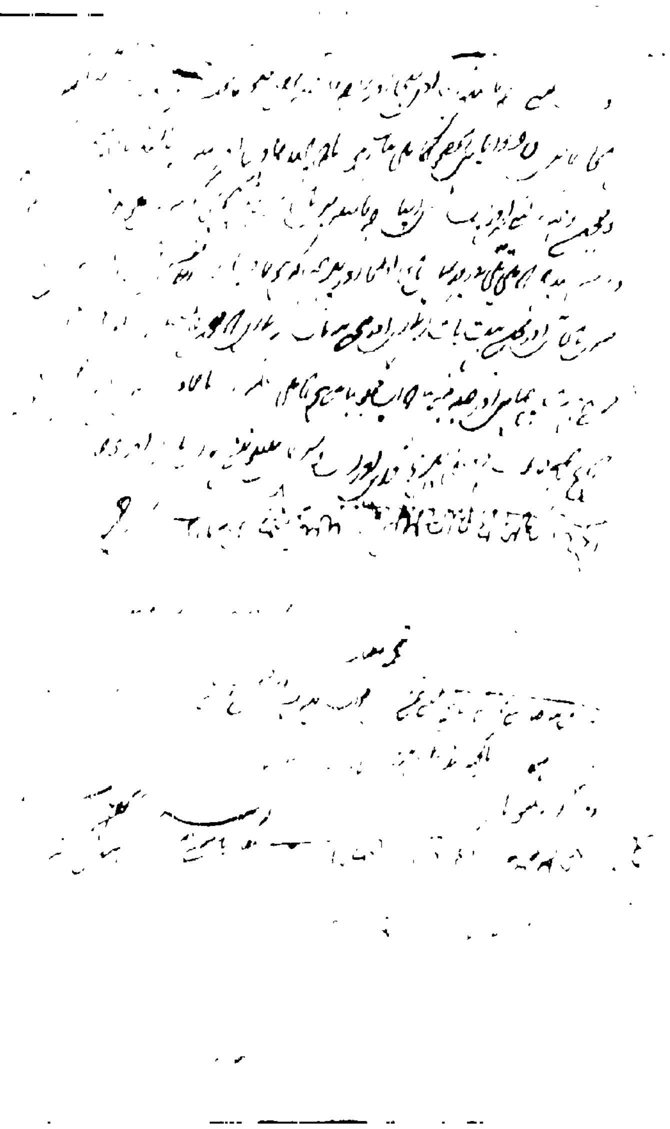
* Another account is that the rope broke the first time ; it was only when he was strung up the second time that "there was no hitch in the proceedings".

** Another version is that a tuft of his hair (*shikha*) was cut by some British officers who sent it to England as a trophy.



TATYA TOPE

It has been said of him that he was by far the biggest brain on the Indian side, that had there been a few more like him India would have been wrested from the British. For two long years Tatya Tope kept the English Generals at bay, and it was only through treachery that he could be captured. In England and Europe the name of Tatya Tope had at the time become more popular than the names of the English Generals fighting in India.



[illegible] statement [illegible] on April 10, 1879, after [illegible] by Major M[illegible]



Mounting the platform with firm step and serene countenance, Tatya Tope put the noose round his neck himself.

English ladies present to witness the operation folded their arms in silent prayer for the soul of the departing hero.

After the execution, a British military officer reverentially collected the tuft of his hair and sent it as a trophy to London where it is still carefully preserved in a public museum.



Sri K. M. Munshi, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, handing presents in memory of the valiant General to Sri Narain Rao Tope, his nephew, on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of 1857 held at Lucknow on May 10, 1957. The presents included a token sum of Rs.1,001

of the Peshwa, Tatya Tope, as his companion obeyed his orders and followed his fortunes. He declared that he had committed no murder. He was not charged with committing any. He, a retainer of the *ex*-Peshwa's family, was charged with fighting with the English and on that charge alone he was convicted and hanged. Surely, under the circumstances of the case, the punishment was greater than the offence."

In the afternoon of April 19, 1859, a telegraphic message was sent from Indore by Capt. Herbert to the Government of India at Calcutta saying that "Tatya Tope was sentenced to death and executed yesterday at Sipree. He was fully identified and acknowledged himself." The Local Government of the North Western Provinces also received a telegram from Major Macpherson at Gwalior saying that he had received a telegraphic message from Major Meade that Tatya Tope was tried, sentenced and executed at Sipree on the 18th.

A life of unique valour, burning patriotism and self-sacrifice thus came to an end.

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च,
तस्माद् परिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितु मर्हसि।*

Treatment of his family

Tatya Tope's father and family had been arrested at Gwalior and investigations about their implication in the rebellion were made by Major Meade. He was satisfied that the family had not in any way assisted in the mutiny nor had any of them helped or encouraged Tatya Tope in his actions. They were thereupon allowed to return to Bithoor and in order that they may not be molested in the way or at Bithoor Major Meade furnished them with a parwana stating the fact of their arrest and subsequent release on May 27, 1859, and testifying to their innocence. The parwana directed them to take up their residence at Bithoor and for this purpose to present themselves before the Magistrate of Kanpur.

On the strength of this parwana the family found their way to Bithoor and lived there for some time. But they had no means of livelihood there, so Tatya Tope's father, with some members of the family, went to settle at Varanasi where he later died.

Of the six step-brothers of Tatya Tope the third one, namely Lakshman Rao, remained at Bithoor and re-constructed the ancestral house which had been destroyed by army officers. He is no more now, but his son Narayan Rao Tope, is still living at Bithoor in the same house.

D. THE PERSON HANGED : WAS HE THE REAL TATYA TOPE ?

The circumstances in which Tatya Tope was captured, tried and hanged have given rise to doubts whether it was the real Tatya Tope who was hanged or whether he was a "substitute" whom Man Singh got captured and thus saved the real Tatya Tope. These doubts have gained currency by the declarations which Tatya Tope's nephew, Narayan Rao of Bithoor, has been making since Independence that the person hanged was some other man. These doubts have found support from certain historically accepted circumstances. The position in this respect was carefully analysed in a learned article contributed by Sri Shrinivas Balaji Hardikar, a political and social worker and President, District Congress Committee, Kanpur, to the Weekly *Hindustan* (Hindi) (Special Independence Day Number) dated August 17, 1958. The article is entitled "Tatya Tope was not hanged". Here is a summary of the article :

*Death is certain of him who is born; so for the inevitable, it is not proper for you to bewail—Lord Krishna to Arjun in the *Geeta*.

Sri Narayan Rao's points in support of his contention are :

(a) Shortly after the hanging of the alleged Tatya Tope, his father, Pandurang Rao, along with the members of his family, was released from the Gwalior Fort. They came then to their home at Bithoor but the house had been razed to the ground by the authorities and he had no place to stay nor any helper to aid him. At that very time Tatya Tope came to Bithoor in the guise of a sadhu and gave some money to his father. It was then that his father was able to put up a kuchcha house for himself and the members of his family.

(b) In 1861, took place the marriage of the sister of Tatya Tope, by name Durga. She was married in a family of Varanasi. At that time also Tatya Tope came in disguise and gave money for the marriage.

(c) In 1862, Tatya Tope's father and mother died. Tatya Tope was present in the guise of a *sanyasi* at their death-bed.

Balaji Hardikar's arguments.

Sri Hardikar says that at first he did not attach value to these stories. However, as time went on, he had occasion to read the books of some English writers and had formed the firm belief that the person hanged at Sipree (Shivpuri) was not Tatya Tope. He gives the following arguments for his view :

(i) After 1857, twelve persons of Tatya Tope's family, including his father, were kept in Gwalior Fort pending investigations into their antecedents. His mother Rukmini Bai and his sister Durga were among the prisoners. They were found to be innocent and were released. Tatya Tope's father and the members of his family thereupon came to Bithoor to settle there. Due to financial difficulties the family broke up ; three brothers went away to Nepal, two of them obtaining service under the Nepal Government, the third looked after the property of Sai Bai, widow of Baji Rao, who had settled in Nepal. Another brother of Tatya Tope, Ram Krishna Pandurang, reached Baroda in search of employment. There he met the Maharaja and said that he was the brother of Tatya Tope and wanted employment. The Maharaja, apprehending trouble with the Government, put the man before the Assistant Resident who took a written statement from him. Of the questions the officer asked, one was 'where is Tatya Tope these days' ? This was in 1862. Now, when Tatya Tope had been hanged in 1859, this question by a responsible officer would not have been asked if the man hanged was the real Tatya Tope.

(ii) The answer which Ram Krishna Rao had given to the Assistant Resident was significant. He had said : 'I do not know. Since the time we separated from Tatya Tope, we have never met him nor have heard about him. If Tatya had actually been hanged, the members of his family would not have been ignorant of his death.

(iii) In the same way in 1862 when Rao Saheb, the brother of Nana Saheb, was being tried at Kanpur, this question was put to him : 'where is Tatya Tope these days ?' This question was also significant. having been put after the hanging of Tatya Tope three years back. If no doubt had existed about the identity of the person hanged, what was the need or occasion for this question ?

(iv) According to the procedure which had been invariably adopted in the trial of mutineers and rebels the trial of Tatya Tope should have been held at Kanpur, the district of his residence. There

was no need for his trial at Shivpuri where he could not be properly identified. There was something suspicious about the whole affair. Khan Bahadur Khan, the revolutionary of Bareilly, was arrested in Nepal, but was tried at Bareilly. Rao Saheb, the nephew of Nana Saheb, was apprehended in Kashmir, but tried at Kanpur. Moro Panth Tambey, the father of the Rani of Jhansi, was arrested in Datia, but was taken to Jhansi for trial. Jwala Prasad had surrendered himself in Nepal, but it was at Kanpur where his trial was held. Sita Ram, the son of Rango Bapuji, was brought to Satara for trial. Also, several other persons who had been arrested on the suspicion of being Nana Saheb were brought to Kanpur for identification. Why then was Tatya Tope, who was arrested in the jungle of Peron, tried at Shivpuri and why was he not brought to Kanpur where he could have been properly identified ?

(v) All the leaders of the revolt who could be arrested by the Government were prosecuted in the ordinary criminal courts or by special commissions. The cases of Bahadur Shah and Rao Saheb are examples—the former was prosecuted before a Commission, Rao Saheb before a regular court. Contrary to this practice Tatya Tope was court-martialled. There was no need to make an exception in this case, but it was the intention of the authorities to hide certain matters from public attention. If he was prosecuted before an ordinary criminal court or before a special commission, the things which the authorities wished to hide would have been exposed.

(vi) The general belief that Tatya Tope was betrayed by Raja Man Singh is not free from suspicion. In the long statement which Tatya Tope made after his capture it was clearly stated that prior to surrendering himself to the British, Man Singh had made consultations with him (Tatya Tope). Further, the spies of Tatya Tope used to meet Man Singh in the British Cantonment, where he was held. It is hardly possible to believe that the able and cautious Tatya Tope would so easily repose complete confidence in a person like Man Singh who was friendly with the British army officers and under their full control.

(vii) In the long statement of Tatya Tope there is no mention, direct or implied, of Man Singh having betrayed him, nor are there any condemnatory remarks about him. If it was a fact that Man Singh had betrayed Tatya Tope, then the latter would surely have said harsh things about his former friend.

(viii) After the surrender of Man Singh the British officers had given him a promise that if he could get Tatya Tope arrested the Government would use their influence with the Gwalior Darbar in getting back his jagir. But after the arrest and subsequent execution of Tatya Tope the British did not fulfil this promise. How could this be accounted for ? Sri Hardikar makes the point that if the person whom Man Singh got arrested was really Tatya Tope, then certainly the Government would have got the jagir returned to him as was done in the case of many other persons who had aided the British. The reason why this was not done in the case of Raja Man Singh is, according to Sri Hardikar, that the authorities seriously suspected that the person who had been arrested through Man Singh was not the real Tatya Tope.

(ix) Man Singh, who was in great difficulties, was being helped by the

British in order to induce him to secure the arrest of Tatya Tope because the latter could not be caught without the assistance of some person, such as Man Singh, who knew the whereabouts of Tatya Tope. It was believed that Man Singh was shielding Tatya Tope from capture in the jungles of his former jagir. It was the conviction of British Commanders that the Military forces alone could never apprehend Tatya Tope. At that time General Napier had succeeded Sir Hugh Rose to the Command in Central India, and the new officer began to think of plans to get on Tatya Tope. General Napier had under him Major Meade who was in charge of a cavalry regiment. Major Meade, in order to put pressure on Man Singh, arrested the ladies of his family. Man Singh was naturally anxious about the honour of his family and so he consulted Tatya Tope. Thus he (Man Singh) surrendered himself to the British as stated by Tatya Tope. In his statement Tatya Tope said that Man Singh had consulted him before surrendering himself. Sri Hardikar observes that it was unthinkable that a brave and self-respecting person like Tatya Tope would have advised Man Singh to surrender. In the dilemma in which Man Singh was placed he had to think out a way to save the ladies. So, it was settled between Man Singh and Tatya Tope that the former should get the 'double' of Tatya Tope arrested and handed to the British so that the ladies could be released and at the same time the real Tatya Tope could also escape. There was no dearth of men in the camp of Tatya Tope who could sacrifice themselves for their beloved leader and one such person did actually come forward. And it was he who was then arrested by Major Meade, and hanged after a hurried trial.

Conflict of evidence

The *National Herald* of 19th May, 1957, contains certain observations on Tatya Tope's end in the editorial column *Notes on the News*. It refers to the conflict of evidence on the question whether this leader was actually hanged or whether some other person was taken prisoner under the name of Tatya Tope, was tried and hanged. There is no doubt that as shown by Sri Hardikar the circumstances of the arrest, the summary trial and the hurried execution do raise doubts about the real Tatya Tope having been hanged. In any case, the matter is a fit subject for further research.

E. ESTIMATE OF TATYA TOPE

Though Tatya Tope had no regular military education during his boyhood and youth and though he had seen no service in the field, he gave proof of his military genius in all his campaigns. He was a born leader, organizer and had all the gifts of a great military general. It has been said of him that he was by far the biggest brain on the Indian side, that with a few more like him India would have been wrested from the English.*

Colonel Malcolm writes about him thus : "For two long years Tatya Tope waged relentless war against the British in the face of many odds. His soldiers were half-disciplined and he had to keep together a force of beaten soldiers who were bound with no tie to his person. He had to collect fighting

*Percy Cross Standing in *Guerilla Leaders of the World.*

weapons and stores, a difficult task in itself, and on top of it he had to induce recruits to join the service which promised only insistent flying at 60 miles a day. Yet with these handicaps, he harassed the English and caused so much loss to them as no other leader of the revolt had done. His successes were few, defeats many ; yet he neither lost heart nor courage—it seemed as if defeat gave him a new spirit and further spurs for fresh action. In England and Europe the name of Tatya Tope had at the time become more popular than that of most of the English generals."

He was innocent of the atrocities at Kanpur. Some British writers have, without proof, accused him for the happenings at the Sattichaura Ghat and the massacre at Bibighar. Others have held him innocent, and he himself declared in the statement made after his capture that he had no hand in the murders ; that he had, on the contrary, gone out of his way to protect English women and children.

Tatya Tope came into real prominence only after the back of the movement had been broken. He refused to recognise defeat in the face of the fact that most of the nationalist leaders had been liquidated and that he himself had practically no chance of success against the powerful Government. But he knew no dismay and refused to recognise defeat. Even in his extremities he never thought of surrender.

It has been said that like Napoleon he could excite people wherever he went and secure shelter even from those who knew that the harbouring of a person like him was to court death.

William Russell, the celebrated war correspondent of those days, wrote as follows on January 17, 1859, in praise of Tatya Tope : " Our very remarkable friend, Tatya Tope, is too troublesome and clever an enemy to be admired. Since last June he has kept Central India in a fervour. He has sacked stations, plundered treasuries, emptied arsenals ; collected armies, lost them ; fought battles, lost them ; taken guns from native princes, lost them ; taken more, lost them ; then his motions have been like forked lightning; for weeks he has marched thirty and forty miles a day. He has crossed the Narbada to and fro ; he has marched between our columns, behind them and before them. Ariel was not more subtly aided by the best stage mechanism. Up mountains, over rivers, through ravines and valleys, amid swamps, on he goes, backwards and forwards, and sideways and zigzag ways—now falling upon a post-cart and carrying off the Bombay mails—now looting a village, headed and barred, yet evasive as Proteus."

After their defeat in the third battle of Kanpur the revolutionaries under Tatya Tope had proceeded to Kalpi. In January 1858, he laid siege to the town of Charkhari and in the beginning of March the town was captured and later the fort of Charkhari also fell into his hands. This campaign was conducted by Tatya Tope in such a masterly manner that Mr. Corney, the Assistant Magistrate at Charkhari, wrote the following despatch to the Governor-General in praise of the abilities of the insurgents : "The enemy conducted all their operations very systematically. They could afford their relief parties ; while some fought, others rested ; as one set was observed going away, another was seen coming to take its place even during the continuance of the conflict. They had their bugle calls during the last grand assault, and each separate band of matchlock-men was led on and performed its assigned task under the tuition evidently of some of the smartest sepoys who had been instructed by us in the art of war. They had their hospital doolies and they appeared to have a large well-regulated bazar with abundance of supplies. They in short displayed all the active energies of the battle-field."

F. MEMORIALS TO TATYA TOPE

From 1859 to 1905, at the place where the brave Tatya Tope had smilingly climbed the scaffold, there stood an engraved stone proclaiming the execution of Tatya Tope as having taken place on April 18, 1859. The inhabitants of Shivpuri had turned this stone into a place of pilgrimage, painting vermilion on it, burning incense and offering flowers in homage to the great soul. The stone was thus deified. There was a general belief that if any one approached the stone with a cap on, the soul of Tatya Tope would assume form to snatch it away ; so people approached the stone bare-headed.

After the removal of the Cantonment from Shivpuri and the return of the land to Gwalior, the Maharaja decided to convert the place into his summer capital on account of its salubrious climate and scenic beauty. An English Colonel who had been entrusted with the work of laying out the township was struck by the veneration of the people for this stone. He had it removed, lest the spirit of Tatya Tope should again rouse anti-British feelings. For 18 long years there remained no sign to mark the sanctified place. In 1924 some patriotic gentlemen again laid a stone on a masonry platform on the same spot. This stone, besmeared with vermilion and an object of general veneration, reminds the visitor of the exploits of the great fighter for the country's freedom.

To the memory of Tatya Tope the Uttar Pradesh Government have put up a memorial at Kanpur in the garden which, during the British days, was known as the "Memorial Well Garden". It is now named as *Tatya Tope Udyan*. An imposing bust of this loving patriot erected within it inspires the people with feelings of courage and devotion to the country.

The inscription on the statue of Tatya Tope reads as follows :

प्रथम स्वतंत्रता-संग्राम में अपने पराक्रम एवं कौशल से विदेशी शासकों का दर्प दमन करने वाले सेनानी तात्या टोपे।

On the occasion of the centenary celebrations, which took place on May 10, 1957, to commemorate the first war of independence, Sri Narayan Rao Tope, as one of the surviving members of the family of Tatya Tope, was honoured in the pious memory of the great hero by the Uttar Pradesh Government. A token gift of Rs.1,001 and complimentary articles were presented to him in open darbar at Lucknow. He was also given a Sanad which reads as follows :

स्वतन्त्रता-संग्राम शताब्दी समारोह, १९५७।

अट्ठारह सौ सत्तावन के भारतीय स्वातंत्र्य-संग्राम की शताब्दी इस वर्ष मनायी जा रही है। उस संग्राम में देश की स्वतंत्रता के लिए अनेकानेक वीर सेनानियों और अन्य देश भक्तों ने भाग लिया और स्वदेश के लिए अपने को बलिदान किया।

इस संग्राम के वीर सेनानी तथा अग्रगण्य नेता तात्या टोपे की पुण्य स्मृति में उत्तर प्रदेश शासन की ओर से उनके भ्रातृज श्री नारायण राव टोपे को १००१ रु०, रौप्यथाल तथा कौशाम्बर इत्यादि की सांकेतिक भेंट दी जाती है।

राज्यपाल की आज्ञा से,

लखनऊ :	आदित्यनाथ झा,
२० वैशाख शक संवत् १८७९,	मुख्य सचिव,
१० मई, १९५७।	उत्तर प्रदेश शासन।

Sri Narayan Rao Tope has also been granted by the Uttar Pradesh Government a life-pension in his capacity as one of the surviving members resident in Uttar Pradesh of Tatya Tope's family. The Government of India too have granted pensions to him and also to his two cousin brothers, Sri Shanker Rao Tope and Sri Raghunath Rao Tope, residing at Indore, in memory of the great fighter for freedom.

ANNEXURE I

(Referred to at page 489)

ACCOUNT BY T. R. E. HOLMES OF THE CAPTURE OF TATYA TOPE

Tatia, however, was still at large. The jungle in which he had taken refuge belonged by right to a feudatory of Scindhia, named Man Singh, with whom he had lately been associated. This man had, however, a few months before, been deprived of his estates by his over-lord, had rebelled against him, and, having been attacked by Napier, who could not afford to overlook any disturbance even though it were unconnected with the mutiny, had entered upon the career of an outlaw. He happened at this time to be wandering in the jungle. One day he came across Tatia. "Why did you leave your force?" he asked. "You have not acted rightly in so doing." "I was tired of running away," replied Tatia, "and, whether I have done right or wrong, I will remain with you". He might indeed feel that he was safe where he was, for no European would ever be able to follow him through the pathless mazes of the jungle to his hiding place. But it had occurred to Napier, who knew that he was somewhere in the jungle, that he might be able to effect his capture if he could first succeed in gaining over Man Singh. It was unlikely that Man Singh would refuse to surrender if a sufficient bait were held out to him. For he had staked everything on the issue of his quarrel with Scindhia, and had lost. His one chance of regaining his lost wealth and position would be to place himself in the hands of the British and to court their good offices.

Major Richard Meade, an officer of the Gwalior Contingent, had already been sent by Napier, in command of a small detachment, to clear the country in the neighbourhood of the jungle and to attack Tatia and Man Singh if he should find an opportunity of doing so. In the first week of March he heard that the Thakoor of a village in which his troops were quartered was connected with Man Singh. On the 8th he went to see the Thakoor and succeeded in getting him to promise to bring Man Singh's agent to him and to try to persuade Man Singh himself to surrender. Three days later the agent presented himself before Meade who gave him a letter for his master, which contained an invitation to surrender. Some weeks of negotiation followed. On the 31st, Meade was informed that Man Singh was prepared to accept the invitation on certain specified conditions. Some of these he could not accept. At last all Man Singh's scruples were overcome. It was agreed that he should be free to remain in the British Camp, instead of being handed over to the tender mercies of Scindhia; and on the 2nd of April he gave himself up.

March 11.

But the most delicate part of Meade's task remained to be done. He knew that Man Singh must be longing to be restored to the position which he had occupied before his rebellion. Accordingly, on that day and the next he repeatedly talked to him in private and laboured to instil into his mind the idea that, if he wanted to establish a claim to indulgence, he must make himself useful to Government. Meanwhile, Tatia, though he knew that Man Singh had surrendered, had not the faintest suspicion of what was passing through his mind. On the 5th he sent a messenger to ask him whether he would advise him to rejoin Feroz Shah, or to remain where he was. Man Singh sent back word to Tatia that he would come and see him in three days. Two days later he allowed Meade to be informed that he was prepared to apprehend Tatia if Government would distinctly promise to restore to him a portion of his estate. Meade was not empowered to promise so much. All that he could do was to tell Man Singh that any claim which he might establish would be considered. Man Singh's mind was soon made up. He promised to do his best to apprehend Tatia.

April 7.

But to apprehend Tatia was as difficult as to stalk a red deer. His spies swarmed in the British Camp. It was obviously necessary that the work of seizing him should be entrusted to natives only, and that of those natives none but Man Singh himself should know who the intended victim was. Accordingly, Meade selected a number of sepoys and, without mentioning Tatia's name, ordered them to obey any instructions which Man Singh might give them. That night Man Singh went to see Tatia in fulfilment of his promise and told him that Meade was kindly disposed towards him. Once more Tatia asked him whether he would advise him to rejoin Feroz Shah, or to stay where he was. Man Singh said that he would give a definite answer in the morning and then went away. About midnight he came back, followed by the sepoys, and found Tatia asleep. The sepoys woke him up, seized him, and carried him back to Meade. He was then conveyed to Sipree.*

Capture of Tatia

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*From *A History of the Indian Mutiny* by T. R. E. Holmes.

ANNEXURE II

(*Referred to at page* 491)

EXTRACTS FROM THE DEPOSITION OF TATYA TOPE TAKEN AT CAMP MUSHAIRI, 10TH APRIL 1859, IN THE PRESENCE OF MAJOR MEADE, COMMANDING FIELD FORCE

[The original is in Persian character. This is the authorized translation]

My name is Tatia Topi; my father's name is Pandurang, inhabitant of Jola Pargana Patoda Zilla Myeir (Maihar?) I am a resident of Bithoor. I am about forty-five years of age, in the service of Nana Saheb, in the grade of companion or *aide-de-camp*.

In the month of May 1857, the Collector of Cawnpore sent a note to the Nana Saheb at Bithur, asking him to forward his wife and children to England. The Nana consented to do so, and four days later the Collector wrote to him to bring his troops in from Bithur. I went with the Nana with about one hundred sepoys and three hundred matchlock-men and two guns to the Collector's house at Cawnpore. The Collector was then in the entrenchment and not in his house. He sent us word to remain, and we stopped for the night at his house. The Collector came in the morning and told the Nana to occupy his own house which was in Cawnpore. We remained there for four days, and the gentleman said it was fortunate we had come to his aid as the sepoys were disobedient, and that he would apply to the General on our behalf. The General wrote to Agra, whence word came that arrangements would be made for the pay of our men.

Two days afterwards the three Regiments of Infantry and the Second Light Cavalry surrounded us and imprisoned the Nana and myself in the Treasury and plundered the Magazine and the Treasury of everything they contained, leaving nothing in either. The sepoys made over two lakhs and eleven thousand rupees to the Nana, keeping their own sentries over it. The Nana was also under charge of these sentries, and the sepoys who were with us joined the rebels. After this the whole army marched from that place, and the rebels took the Nana Saheb and myself and all our attendants with them and said, "Come to Delhi." Having gone six miles from Cawnpore the Nana Saheb said that as the day was far spent it was better to halt, and march next day; they agreed and halted. In the morning the whole army told the Nana to go with them towards Delhi. He refused, and they then said, "Come with us to Cawnpore and fight there". The Nana objected to this, but they would not listen to him, and so taking him as a prisoner they marched towards Cawnpore and began to fight there. The fighting continued for twenty-four days, and on the twenty-fourth day the General raised the flag of peace and the fighting ceased. The Nana got a female, who had been captured before, to write a note to General Wheeler that the sepoys would not obey his orders and that if he wished he would get boats and convey him and those with him in the entrenchment as far as Allahabad. An answer came from the General that he approved of this arrangement, and the same evening the General sent the Nana something over one lakh of rupees and authorised him to keep the amount.

The following day I went and got ready forty boats, and having caused all the gentlemen, ladies and children to get into the boats, I started them off to Allahabad. In the meantime, the whole army, artillery included, having got ready, arrived at the river Ganges. The sepoys jumped into the water and commenced a massacre of all the men, women and children and set the boats on fire. They destroyed thirty-nine boats. One, however, escaped as far as Kalakankar, but was there caught and brought back to Cawnpore, and all on board of it destroyed.

Four days after this the Nana said he was going to Bithur to keep the anniversary of his mother's death; the sepoys allowed him to go, some of them accompanying him. Having kept the anniversary they brought him back to Cawnpore, and took for their pay the money they had first made over to the Nana's charge, and made arrangements to fight at Hasua Fatehpur, where they heard some Europeans had arrived from Allahabad, and they told the Nana to accompany them. The Nana refused. The Nana and I remained at Cawnpore, and sent Jawla Prasad the Nana's agent with them to Fatehpur. Being defeated there, they retreated to Cawnpore and the European force pressed them the whole way to Cawnpore, when there was a battle for about two hours and the rebel army was again defeated, and ran away from Cawnpore.

Under these circumstances the Nana and I fled to Bithur, arriving there at midnight, and the rebel army followed us. Next morning the Nana, taking some money with him, went to Fatehpur*. The rebel army followed and looted the place. The Nana, Bala Saheb, Rao Saheb and I, with all our wives crossed the Ganges in boats, and arrived at Fatehpur in the Lucknow territory, and put up with Choudri Bhopal Singh. Some days passed when the 42nd Native Infantry arrived at Sheorajpur and wrote to the Nana to send there some one to take them to him.

* * *

I had been quarrelling with Rao Saheb all the way from Deogarh Bari, and told him I could flee no longer, and that I would leave him on the first opportunity. The opportunity occurred here, and I left him and accompanied the above-named parties in this direction. When I left the Rao Saheb he had about six thousand men with him. I was accompanied by three men, two to cook my food and one groom, three horses and a pony. The two Pandits were Ram Rao and Narayan. The groom Govind left me and ran off after coming two stages. We reached the Paron jungle and met Raja Man Singh. Ajit Singh took leave of Raja Man Singh and went home. Narayan Singh and I remained with Raja Man Singh.

*Village of Fatehpur Chaurasi.

The Raja said, "Why did you leave your force? You have not acted rightly in so doing." I replied that I was tired of running away, and would remain with him whether I had done right or wrong.

I heard after this that Rao Saheb's army had gone to Patan and thence towards Sironj. I told Raja Man Singh I would send a man to obtain news of them, and he approved of my doing so. I sent a man accordingly, and got information that the Rao Saheb was not there, but Emam Ali, Woordie Major, Feroz Shah and Adil Mohammad, Nawab of Ambapani, were there with eight or nine thousand men. Emam Ali, Woordie Major of the 5th Irregular Cavalry, wrote to me to come and join them. I had lost my master's (the Nana's) seal, and had another made up at Paron.

When I heard as above from the Woordie Major, I sent a man to Raja Man Singh who was at Mahudia in Major Meade's camp to inform him that I had received a note of this purport and to ask him if I should go or remain. Raja Man Singh had consulted me before giving himself up to Major Meade, and had left one of his men with me, saying "stop wherever this man takes you". Raja Man Singh replied to my message that he would come in three days to see me and we should then decide what to do.

He came accordingly on the night of the third day and spoke a great deal to me, and told me that he had met Major Meade and that his disposition was good. When I asked him what he advised whether I should go or remain—he said he would reply in the morning. I then went to sleep, and during the night some of the sepoys of the Government came and seized me and took me to Major Meade's camp.

(*Signed by Tantia Topi*).

Question by Major Meade: Have you made this statement of your own free will and without compulsion? And has any promise been made or hope held out to you to induce you to make it?

Answer: I have of my own free will caused this statement to be written, and no one has forced me, or held out hope or promise of any sort to induce me to do so.

Signed by Tatia Topi, Agent of Nana Saheb, and *two witnesses*.

The above deposition or statement was made by the prisoner Tantia Topi in my presence on the 10th of April, 1859, at Camp Mushairi, of his own voluntary act and without compulsion of any sort, or promise made or hope held out to him as inducement to make it.

(*Sd.*) *R. J. Meade*,
Major, Commanding Field Force.*

*Military Department Proceedings, no. 5 of 1859, Consultations, 2nd September, No. 144, National Archives, New Delhi.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

LAST DAYS OF OTHER LEADERS OF THE REVOLT

1. THE FUGITIVES IN NEPAL
2. MEMBERS OF NANA SAHEB'S FAMILY
3. BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL
4. RANA BENI MADHAV SINGH
5. PRINCE FIROZE SHAH
6. KHAN BAHADUR KHAN
7. MUHAMMAD HASAN
8. SOME OTHERS

Note This chapter deals only with the cases of some of the leaders. Accounts about others appear in the relevant chapters.

1. THE FUGITIVES IN NEPAL

As has been stated elsewhere in this book most of the nationalist leaders were driven from their districts and found their way to Nepal. But that country gave them no asylum. Maharaja Jung Bahadur had declared in unequivocal terms that "an intimate friendship exists between the British Government and the Nepal State, both of them are bound by treaty to apprehend and surrender to the other the enemies of either . . . . the Nepal State will neither assist, show mercy to. nor permit to remain in its territories or within its frontier" those who had taken up arms against the British. So, while Jung Bahadur could not tolerate the existence of these people in his territories, he hesitated, having regard to the traditions of his country, to capture these princely refugees by force and hand them to the British. In the circumstances he preferred to use persuasive measures to make the rebel chiefs surrender. Failing surrender by persuasion, he decided to use force.

It was because of this attitude of the Nepal Darbar that the unfortunate fugitives and their followers moved from place to place within the Nepal and Terai forests, suffering great privations. The poor sepoys had no money to buy their food for which the Gurkhas demanded high prices--some of the sepoys even sold their muskets to buy rice. Many died of starvation, many more of fever and dysentery. Those who survived were being pursued by Gurkha troops trying either to capture or to expel the unwanted guests.

Reduced to these extremities many leaders resigned themselves to their fate and surrendered to the Nepal Darbar to be made over

to the British Government*. But several yet remained steadfast and would not think of laying down their arms.

2. MEMBERS OF NANA SAHEB'S FAMILY

Rao Saheb : He had been hiding himself in Jammu territory and had with him his wife and child. He was arrested at Chenani, his whereabouts having been disclosed to the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot by a person who had a personal grudge against him. He was tried at Kanpur and, though he had no hand in the murder of Europeans at Kanpur, was found guilty--"Bibighar had to be avenged" and Rao Saheb was hanged for the sins of others. Further particulars of this leader, who was proclaimed Peshwa at Gwalior, appear in *Appendix B*.

Bala Saheb : A fugitive in Nepal, Bala Saheb made some endeavours to settle the terms of his capitulation with the British Commanders. On April 25, 1859, he sent a letter to Major Richardson in which he pleaded his innocence saying that he had all along acted under duress and in the influence of Nana Saheb. He also stated that he had saved the life of an English child—a daughter, aged about 10 years, of the Judge of Fatehpur—that he was keeping her concealed with his wife and that he had shown her to General Badri Nar Singh, the brother of Maharaja Jung Bahadur. The letter ended with the words : "Thus I continued helpless. I am guiltless and this will be found to be the case on enquiry. If you send a reply, I will come to you and relate every thing. . . . . Whoever dies, dies alone, for thus it happens. According to your reply I will act".†

In reply, Major Richardson referred to Queen Victoria's proclamation, sending a copy of it in Nagri bearing the Queen's seal and adding that if he wanted anything further to be explained he (the Bala) could send a trust-worthy man to whom everything, not understood, could be explained. The Major's letter ended with the words : "You mention that you have a Christian child with you. Recollect you are a man and as such it is your duty to protect that child from harm. Terms beyond those of the Ishtihar of Her Majesty, I have not the power to offer you. As I have no person who can well read Sanscrit I have had difficulty in reading your representation. It will be better if you write in Oordoo (Urdu) or Nagri."‡

Bala Saheb did not, however, surrender, but his life was soon claimed by the malaria of the Tarai. The Nepal Darbar were good enough to allow his widow to stay on in Nepal along with the two widows of Baji Rao and the wife (or widow) of Nana Saheb. The young daughter of Baji Rao, Kusuma Bai by name, was also with this group. Prior to the out-break at Kanpur, she had been married in a family of Gwalior and when peace was restored she came down to live with her husband at that station.

It is said that the jewels of Baji Rao, which were with his widows, eventually found their way to the Nepal Darbar, and some of them, it is said, are studded in His Majesty's royal crown.

3. BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL

She too had taken shelter in Nepal. The British tried to induce her to come back to India by assuring her all honours befitting her rank and promising a suitable pension to her independently of the allowance which was being paid to her husband, the *ex*-King Wajid Ali Shah, living in Calcutta. But she thought it dishonourable to accept these overtures. She preferred to spend her days in suffering in a foreign land than to accept

*The total number of armed rebels made over by the Government of Nepal to their British allies was 2,000—Dr. Sen, page 371.

†Foreign Political Consultations, May 27, 1857, Nos. 63-69, National Archives New Delhi.

‡*Ibid.*

a pension from the British, and thereby tacitly renounced the rights of her son to the Avadh kingdom.

Writes Sir William Russell : "The Begum declares undying war against us ; and in the circumstances of the annexation of the kingdom . . . ., the apparent ingratitude to the family for money lent and aid given at the most critical times, has many grounds for her indignant rhetoric."*

4. RANA BENI MADHAV SINGH

Amongst those who would not lay down their arms was Rana Beni Madhav Singh of Shankerpur in Avadh. He had proved a great headache for the authorities. He had a large army of matchlock-men and constantly harassed the British troops. According to Russell, "Beni Madhav Singh had long headed the Byswara district and tribe which furnished in the old days about 40,000 of the finest of our sepoys to the Bengal Army and had naturally great influence in the country." Along with his brother, Gajraj Singh, he plunged himself into the national struggle and with the leaders of Lucknow fought in the battle of the Residency. After the loss of Lucknow, he carried on his exploits on the Grand Trunk Road and later resorted to guerilla warfare.

Ultimately he too found his way to Nepal. There, he did not respond to the overtures of Maharaja Jung Bahadur to surrender himself. Eventually, he fought the Gorkhas in the Dang valley and died a heroic death with many of his soldiers. Also died with him his brother, Gajraj Singh. His surviving brother along with the Rana's widow and son (then 14 years of age) were in Nepal till December 1859. Eventually, the son received from the British Government an estate yielding an income of Rs.6,000 a year, and was sent to Sitapur to be educated.

It is on record that the brave Beni Madhav Singh when fighting in his town, Shankerpur, was surrounded by the English commanders on three sides with strong armies. He would still not capitulate although the Commander-in-Chief had sent him a message saying that if he surrendered he would be pardoned and given back all his estate. To which the Rana, as a true Rajput, replied : 'It being henceforth impossible to defend the fort, I am going to leave it, but I will never surrender myself to you, for my person belongs not to me, but to my King,' meaning the King of Avadh.

5. PRINCE FIROZE SHAH

Feroze Shah did not stay in India. In 1860 he was in Kandha ; the next year he was found in Bokhara ; another year later he was at Tehran. Between 1863 and 1868, he was moving from place to place between Herat, Bokhara and Kabul. He was then at Samarkand and Constantinople. Thus, wandering from place to place in far-off lands with no money, he was living on the charity of local princes.

Feroze Shah found a final asylum in Macca in 1875. At the time he left India, Feroze Shah was in his early youth, full of life and activity, but his destitution, anxieties and the physical hardships to which he was put, brought all the signs of old age in a young heart. His age at the time of the revolt was 27 or 28 years. Now, in 1875 at the age of 45, he was a broken-down, old looking man nearly blind of one eye and lame. He was in a state of great poverty and, with his wife along with him, lived a miserable life on a small allowance made for his support by the High Sheriff of Macca. He died there in December 1887.

Prince Feroze Shah was a patriot of the highest order. Without resources or following, he raised a large army and bravely fought the British, suffering heavily for his country. He openly condemned the massacres

*Russell, Vol. I, pp. 274-5.

of English women and children perpetrated at some places by furious sepoys, though he himself was relentless in his vengeance against the ruling power. He had issued a proclamation on February 17, 1858, which stated : "The delay in defeating the English has been caused by people killing innocent children and women without any permission whatever from the leaders whose commands were not obeyed. Let us avoid such practices and then proclaim a sacred war."* The Prince's own hands were never soiled by the blood of innocent victims. He fought and killed combatants in open warfare.

Though young in years, he was a saintly person and lived a pious life notwithstanding his imperial descent. It was his piety which took him to Macca to die a coveted death.

Feroze Shah's widow applied for, and received from, the Government of India a compassionate allowance of Rs.5 per mensem in November 1881. The broad-hearted Viceroy, Lord Ripon, raised this amount to Rs.100 per mensem with retrospective effect tenable for life. The condition attached to the allowance was that the lady should never return to India.

6. KHAN BAHADUR KHAN OF BAREILLY

After his defeat and failures Khan Bahadur Khan too eventually found his way to Nepal. There, as already stated, the Nepal authorities would not give shelter to the rebel leaders and Khan Bahadur Khan, along with several others, surrendered, and was made over to the British. He was put on trial. In his defence he pleaded that had he been guilty he would not have surrendered. The evidence was strong against him. It was found that four English officers had been murdered at Bareilly in his name, if not under his direct orders. At least one Englishman had been murdered in his presence. He had also issued a proclamation that anyone giving shelter to Europeans would be punished with death.

In these circumstances, his plea was not accepted and he was sentenced to be hanged. The British regarded him, next to Nana Saheb, amongst the "most active instigators of murder in the rebel ranks". For the fight for the freedom of his country he thus paid with his life. Had he succeeded, he would have been the ruler of Rohilkhand which he held in his sway for many months. But the penalty for waging war against a ruling power is, in the case of defeat, death, and the valiant Rohilla leader, like so many of his countrymen, paid for his patriotism with his life.

His Finance Minister, Sobha Ram, was imprisoned for life. He was sent to Moulmein where, as a cripple, he lived a miserable existence.

7. MUHAMMAD HASAN

The British authorities were keen about his surrender as he had not been guilty of English blood and had in fact saved the lives of Colonel Lennox and his family when they fled Faizabad. He was with the nationalist leaders in Nepal when overtures were made to him by Sheikh Khairuddin, Deputy Collector of Gorakhpur. A lengthy correspondence was exchanged between the two and in one of his letters Muhammad Hasan wrote that he was relying on the omnipotent God for his life and that so long as He protected him no enemy could do him harm, that Government having committed every description of oppression it was foolish for him to have any hope from them even though he had saved Colonel Lennox and his two ladies.

When this correspondence reached him, the Governor General directed that Muhammad Hasan be excused in consideration of his having sheltered and treated kindly Colonel

*Foreign Secret Consultations. No. 122, April 30, 1858.

Lennox and his family and that in the event of his falling into the hands of the Commander-in-Chief or seeking terms, he should receive an assurance not only of life and liberty, but of a liberal maintenance allowance, although his removal from the scene of his recent hostility to Government would be necessary. So, eventually he was prevailed upon to surrender.

Muhammad Hasan had been the Nazim or Governor of Gorakhpur before its incorporation in British India and had lost his office on annexation. During the rebellion he had again become Nazim, but he had no landed property. For his maintenance the British granted him a pension of Rs.200 p.m. with instructions to live in the district of Sitapur.

8. SOME OTHERS

Jwala Prasad

Brigadier Jwala Prasad, one of the chief lieutenants of Nana Saheb, was also one of those who surrendered in Nepal. He was brought to Kanpur in a miserable condition and humiliating manner, was tried and hanged at the Sattichaura Ghat on May 3, 1860.

Raja of Mainpuri

Tej Singh, the Raja of Mainpuri, had surrendered earlier in June 1858. He was promised his life and had received the assurance that no indignity would be offered to him, that even if it was found necessary to imprison him, he would be kept separate from ordinary criminals. He lived at Varanasi on a subsistence allowance of Rs.250 p.m. Rao Bhawani Singh, his uncle, who had helped the British Government, was given the Raja's estates in Mainpuri

Bakht Khan

The end of Bakht Khan is not definitely known. After the fall of Delhi he came to Lucknow and took part in the defence of that city and the subsequent campaigns, but what precisely he did are matters of surmise. It is believed that he was killed in an action on May 13, 1859.

Maulvi Liaqat Ali

What became of Maulvi Liaqat Ali of Allahabad is shrouded in mystery. Sir John Kaye says that after the defeat at Allahabad he went towards Kanpur. None of the innumerable persons arrested and tried at Allahabad, and this went on for several months, ever mentioned as to what had happened to him. One account is that he was arrested at Bombay and after a trial deported to the Andamans.

In recognition of the services rendered to the national cause by Maulvi Liaqat Ali, the Government of India have granted compassionate allowances to certain of the descendants of the two daughters of Maulvi Saheb (he left no sons) who were found to be living in indigent circumstances.

Devi Baksh Singh and others

Of those who preferred a life of misery to laying themselves at the mercy of the power against which they had taken up arms, several were claimed by the malaria of the Nepal Terai. Among these heroes were Raja Devi Baksh Singh of Gonda, Chakledar Hardatt Singh of Khairabad (Sitapur), Gulab Singh of Biswan. And so also perished many other warriors whose names their countrymen do not know, but who died for the noble cause of their motherland.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

MEMORIAL WELL GARDEN

ORIGIN.

HOW THE MEMORIAL WAS RAISED.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MEMORIAL.

CONTROL OVER GARDEN UNDER BRITISH RULE.

ADMISSION TO GARDEN.

QUESTIONS IN COUNCIL.

RE-TRANSFER OF GARDEN TO GOVERNMENT.

TRANSFER OF ANGEL.

NO CONTROVERSIES NOW.

RE-NAMING OF THE GARDEN.

ANNEXURE I : OLD RULES FOR ADMISSION TO THE GARDEN.

ANNEXURE II : DEED OF TRANSFER.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

—GREY, ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

ORIGIN.

The Memorial Well Garden* traces its origin back to 1857, when, on the morning of July 16, the dead bodies of English women and children—the captives housed in Bibighar and slain on the evening of July 15—were thrown into a well situated near the abhorred house of their captivity.

From June 27, 1857, onwards, Nana Saheb had under him British prisoners, chiefly women and children who, at the material time, were confined in a small bungalow called Bibighar. Their number is variously put near about 200. Nana Saheb had been in undisputed control of the city of Kanpur for some weeks. Some days after he had been proclaimed Peshwa on July 1, 1857, news was received that General Havelock, having marched from Allahabad for the relief of Kanpur, was approaching. A division sent to check the advance was

*Almost invariably this has been written by authors and historians as "Memorial Well Gardens", but the present author has preferred to use "Garden" instead of "Gardens" except where excerpts have been reproduced.

defeated. Further encounters took place with no better result.

On the afternoon of the fateful day—the 15th of July, 1857—Nana Saheb learned that General Havelock's army had crossed the Pandu river and was in full march on Kanpur. He thereupon decided to meet the advancing force on the road to Kanpur. It was also decided, it is alleged, at the instigation of a courtesan, that the prisoners at Bibighar should be destroyed.

It is said that on the evening of July 15, the guard on duty at Bibighar, having indirectly refused to shoot the women and children, five men were deputed to finish them, which they did by entering the room with swords. Thereafter, the rooms were locked, and the following morning their corpses* were thrown into the Well within the compound of the bungalow. It is also said that one or two children who had escaped slaughter the previous evening and who, to save themselves, ran about or round the Well, were also caught by the sweepers and thrown alive into the Well.

A few of the persons who were not completely dead were, it is said, also thrown down—half-living, half-dead. This is based largely on the evidence of John Fitchett, a drummer of the 6th Native Infantry. The following is an excerpt from his statement :

"At about 8 o'clock the next morning, the sweepers living in the compound, I think there were three or four, were ordered to throw the bodies into a dry well, near the house. The bodies were dragged out, most of them by the hair of the head ; those whose clothes were worth taking were stripped. Some of the women were alive, I cannot say how many, but three could speak, they prayed for the sake of God that an end might be put to their sufferings. I remarked one very stout woman, a half-caste, who was severely wounded in both arms, who entreated to be killed. She and two or three others were placed against the bank of the cut by which bullocks go down in drawing water from the well. The bodies were then thrown down.

Ques.: How far were you from the well ?

Ans.: About 100 paces. Yes, I saw this ; and I know I am on my oath.

Ques.: Were there many people present ?

Ans.: Yes there was a great crowd looking on : they were standing along the walls of the compound. They were principally city people and villagers. Yes, there were also sepoys.

Ques.: How old were the boys that you saw the next morning alive, and were they Europeans ?

Ans.: Yes, they were fair children, the eldest I think must have been six or seven and the youngest five years ; it was the youngest who was thrown in by one of the sweepers. The children were running round the well, where else could they go to ? and there was none to save them. No, none said a word, or tried to save them." (Page 9 of the *Narrative*).

It has further been alleged that some of the unfortunate victims were mutilated. This, however, has been disbelieved by Sherer, the then Magistrate of Kanpur, and rightly.

When the scene of occurrence was later visited by Sherer in the company of Bews, a trooper, he found the place in the same condition in which it was left by the 'mutineers'. What he saw in the Well was a terrible sight :

"When we got to the coping of the well, and looked over, we saw, at no great depth, a ghastly tangle of naked limbs. I heard a low cry of pain, and saw Bews almost crouching with a sickening anguish. There is no object in saying more."†

It is not clear from this description whether this "low cry of pain" was from inside the well, or outside, that is, whether it was Bews'

*Said to be about 200 in number. In Sherer's *Narrative* doubt has been expressed about such a large number of bodies being thrown into the Well which was a narrow one and was far too small for all. He says that it seems probable that a portion were dragged down the Ganga which was at no great distance. This is also the version which Sherer gives in his *Havelock's March on Kanpur*. He adds there that at that time he was told about *some of* the bodies having been carried to the river. In the *Narrative* Sherer has also observed that considering the smallness of the house (Bibighar) and the crowded condition of the captives, it was next to impossible that all could have been slaughtered the previous night. "It is exercising, therefore, no morbid imagination and pandering to no prurient curiosity to say", adds Sherer, "that I hold no doubt that some of the living met a more terrible death than assassination, even by being plunged with their dead companions into the tainted waters of the Well"—page 10 of the *Narrative*.

†*Havelock's March on Kanpur* by J. B. Sherer.

cry. If it was from inside the well, then it was most unfortunate, from the view-point of history, that it did not occur to Sherer and his companion to save this life ; because, had he saved it, there would have been at least one person who could have narrated the actual happenings. Many questions would then have been set at rest : who ordered the unfortunate massacre ; who actually performed the inhuman task, and so on.

As it is, the account of the incident that we find in the books is based on doubtful evidence—evidence more of "what might have happened" rather than of "what actually did happen".

Various motives have been imputed for this outrage on humanity. The one generally put forward by English writers is that the idea was the removal of evidence against Nana Saheb and his men. According to one version, the interception on July 15, of a letter sent by one of the female internees to the British Garrison at Allahabad, prompted the decision.

After seeing the Well, Sherer took the first opportunity of conferring with General Havelock, and he did so on July 18. The General asked : "Please at once procure coolies, and have it filled up with earth." The order was carried out and by an arrangement with the Commissariat, the Well was immediately filled "in a rough manner".

A week later, that is on July 25, 1857, Brigadier General Neill, who had taken command from General Havelock, passed the order : "The Well in which are the remains of the poor women and children so brutally murdered by this miscreant, the Nana, will be filled up, and neatly and decently covered over to form their grave ; a party of European soldiers will do so this evening, under the superintendence of an officer."*

In order to remove any misunderstanding about the filling of the Well twice, Sherer has clarified that the order of General Neill related to putting on more earth on the Well to form a sort of mound to mark the spot. From the extract given above it will be seen that General Neill's order was that the Well will be filled up and covered to form the grave of the dead. But another account** has it that the corpses were taken out of the Well. Whether they were put back in the Well or were buried in the adjoining spaces, which are described as the two burial grounds, is not clear.

HOW THE MEMORIAL WAS RAISED.

Later, on the restoration of British authority, a fine was imposed on the city and the money devoted to the Memorial Garden.† According to another version, the fine was imposed only on the "disloyal citizens" of Kanpur.

Be it as it may, the wisdom of raising the Memorial through fines realized from the public cannot be left without question. The sanctity attached to the Memorial was thus wholly lost in the eyes of the general public and the subsequent endeavours of the authorities to make it a consecrated place in the true meaning of that expression proved futile. The denial to Indians of free entry into the Garden did not retrieve the unpopularity which attached to this monument in the eyes of the Indian people.

*Sherer's *Havelock's March on Kanpur*. The aspersion cast on Nana Saheb by General Neill in the above quotation is entirely misconceived. It has not been proved that Nana Saheb had either ordered or instigated the murders—on the contrary the truth is that he had no hand in them. Whether he is to be held 'morally' responsible for them or not is another matter. He has been held innocent even by some of the British writers. Noble as he was (*see* Chapter 21 on General Wheeler and his daughters), it is impossible to assume that he could have approved, much less ordered, the commission of such a ghastly act. The question of Nana Saheb's responsibility for Bibighar (and the Sattichaura Ghat) has been discussed in Chapter 26.

***Memories of Kanpur, being articles from the Imperial Gazetteer, North-Western Provinces.*

†Kanpur Gazetteer, page 222.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MEMORIAL.

The Kanpur Gazetteer (page 267) thus describes the Garden : "Next come the Memorial Gardens within which is the famous well, enclosed by a carved stone screen and surmounted by an angel from the chisel of Baron Marochetti. Hardly, is a cross resting on a pedestal of black marble to mark the site of the Bibighar, and within the grounds is a small cemetery in which were buried those who fell in the defence of Wheeler's entrenchment."

The Memorial thus raised was protected by railings. There was this inscription on the pedestal of the angel : "Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people who were cast into the well below, on the 16th day of July, 1857".

Nearby is the place where once stood Bibighar, and a stone was fixed there on which was inscribed : "Here stood the House of Massacre."

The Garden stretches into an area of 40 acres. Outside the iron railings (providing the boundary of the Garden) and in a spacious plot of some two acres, is the bungalow which during the British regime was occupied by the Superintendent of the Garden.

The Garden, which had been beautifully laid, was well-maintained during British regime. It continues to be so maintained to this day.

CONTROL OVER GARDEN DURING BRITISH RULE

Till 1863, the Garden remained under the control of the Military authorities. Thereafter, it was handed over to the Civil administration.

Rules for the maintenance of the Garden were then framed by the Local Government in 1863. It was laid down (rule III) that an European would be in charge of the Garden and that other necessary establishment for its maintenance would be provided at the cost of Government.

The Garden continued to remain under the management and control of the Local Government through an official committee of management till the end of July 1919. On August 1, 1919, the Garden was transferred to a society, registered as "The Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens Society."

The transfer was made by a registered deed by which the Secretary of State for India transferred to the Society the Memorial Well Garden subject to the condition that the Society shall not alienate the property without the prior concurrence of Government. The transfer was made in view of the impending "reforms"* by which certain subjects which were described as "transferred subjects" were put in charge of Indian Ministers. One of these subjects was "Agriculture" which included matters concerning gardens in general. Accordingly, this Garden would have come in the portfolio of the Minister for Agriculture with the consequential risk of the "out-of-bounds" character of the Garden, so far as Indians were concerned, being disregarded.

The idea underlying the transfer was stated in the Legislative Council in 1920 in these words : "The propriety of restricting the admission of Indians into the Memorial Gardens was raised in the time of Sir James Meston's Government. When the question was raised the European community of Kanpur recognised that the maintenance of the Gardens was not, in the circumstances, a proper charge on Provincial revenues. They, therefore, offered to put up an endowment fund sufficient to maintain the Gardens in future without other help. This solution was accepted by the Local Government and the Government of India, and the Gardens were transferred to a registered body. In future, from the next financial year, there will be no

*Known as the "Montagu Chelmsford Reforms".

charge in respect of these Gardens on the Provincial budget."*

The reason why expenditure on the maintenance of the Garden was considered as an inappropriate charge on Provincial revenues was explained by Government in a later answer given in the Legislative Council to a question asked in 1926 : "These gardens contained the Memorial of a particular community and it was thought desirable that the cost of maintaining them should be met from funds provided by that community. The private society to which they were transferred was willing to establish a fund to meet all expenses. The gardens were accordingly transferred to it."

From a reply given to another question in the Legislative Council in 1926, it appears that the expenditure on the maintenance of the Garden was of the order of Rs.16,000 per annum between the years 1915—1920.

Thus we see :

(a) that the Garden was originally raised out of a fine imposed on the residents of Kanpur ;

(b) that the Garden was first maintained by the Military authorities till 1863 and thereafter by the Civil administration till March 31, 1920, and

(c) that it was then transferred to a registered society on April 1, 1920.

In reply** to a question in the Legislative Council in 1938, however, the Government stated that "the Kanpur Memorial Garden is the private property of a society, registered under Act XXI of 1860,† and this garden was not laid at the cost of the public," which, as we have seen above, is not correct, inasmuch as the garden was laid at public cost‡ and was maintained for a period of more than half a century at the cost of the taxpayer who was, as we shall see presently, not even allowed to have a free access to the premises.

British officers were very keen, and rightly, about the proper maintenance of the Memorial. In June 1927, Major-General A. B. E. Cator, General Officer Commanding, Lucknow District,§ visited the Garden. On noticing that the inscriptions on the graves were getting very faint and might become illegible in a year or two he wrote to Sir William Marris, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, suggesting that the inscriptions be repainted. He added that if funds were not available for the purpose, he himself could raise sufficient money by voluntary subscription only if Sir William had no objection to that course. The raising of any subscription was unnecessary for Sir William Marris took up the matter with the Garden Committee, which was responsible for the up-keep of the graves in the cemetery, and got the inscriptions repainted at once.

ADMISSION TO GARDEN.

Admission of visitors to the Garden was subject to the rules framed first by the Government and later by the Society. Whilst there were no restrictions on the admittance of Europeans to the Garden, there was always much fuss about the entrance of Indian visitors.

The rules framed by the Local Government in 1863, provided that the Garden would be open to the public under special permission

*This reply was given by the Government to a question tabled by C. Y. Chintamani (who was a Member of the Legislative Council) regarding the throwing open of the Garden to the general public.

**The question was put in July 1938, by Dr. Jawahar Lal, M. L. C., of Kanpur.

†Societies' Registration Act, 1860.

‡Fines realized from the people are treated as "public revenues" the world over.

§This refers to 'Military district' which was much bigger in area and jurisdiction than a 'Revenue district'. The former Military districts have since been re-named as Sub areas, so we have now the Lucknow Sub-Area in place of the old Lucknow District.

to be obtained from a member of the Managing Committee (rules IV and VI). This was, however, amended in the same year in March, and the Custodian of the Garden was authorised to permit all respectable Europeans to the consecrated places, while for Indians it continued to be necessary to obtain a special order of a member of the Committee in order to be able to enter the Garden and the enclosure within it.

In 1902, the Garden was visited by an European gentleman, Mr. Smedley by name. He was accompanied by an Indian friend. At his visit, some unpleasant incidents occurred. Consequently, the rules framed in 1863 were revised and rule VI was changed to read as follows :

"VI. The Memorial Gardens shall be open to the public at such hours as the Committee may from time to time determine :

Provided that native Indian visitors who desire admission to the Garden or to any of its enclosures shall obtain a pass from the Magistrate and Collector or, in his absence from the station, from the Judge."

After the management of the Garden was taken over by the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens Society, that body framed its own rules for admission in April 1920. These have been reproduced in *Annexure I* at the end of this chapter.

Here again a special clause was put in to regulate the entry of Indian visitors. Clause VII of the rules read : "VII.--Indian visitors who desire admission to the Gardens or to any of its enclosures should first obtain a pass from the Secretary or from the *Chaplain of Cawnpore (Cantonments) or the* Chaplain of the Christ Church (Civil *Lines*)."

Later, in November 1938, new rules were made by the Society. One of the rules provided that all visitors would be charged two annas as admission fee and the revenue so obtained was to be utilized for the upkeep of the Garden.*

The payment of this levy of -|2|- as admission fee did not, however, entitle an Indian visitor to enter the inner enclosure, that is, the enclosure which surrounded the Well itself.

This question was taken up in the year 1946, by Sri H. K. Kirpalani, a retired I.C.S. officer who, at that time, was Industrial Adviser to the Government of India. As a result of his visit to the Memorial he wrote to the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, Sri H. J. Frampton, suggesting that it was improper that there should be discrimination between persons who purchased tickets to see the Well as regards the degree of approach to the Well. Sri Kirpalani was informed, as usual, that the Gardens were the property of a private society and that society had framed its own rules for the admission of visitors and that according to rule VI the inner enlosure contained the Memorial Well and the two burial grounds which were consecrated land and that, consequently, only Christians were admitted to the enclosure. The reply added that in the case of non-Christians, admission could be obtained by special permission from the Society.

Sri Kirpalani then took up the matter with the Society. He cited the example of Westminster Abbey in London which though consecrated ground, where lie the remains of the illustrious dead of England, is open to admission both to Christians and non-Christians alike. He then suggested that the Society might consider the question of doing away with the restriction. In any case, he added that if it was not possible to do so, then, *in fairness to the intending visitors, a notice should be displayed* at the entrance of the Garden indicating clearly that admission to the inner enclosure was restricted to Christians only. Further, a clear warning to this effect should also be mentioned on the admission tickets.

Subsequent developments about the matter are not relevant in view of the fact that with

**Cf.* note at the end of the rules with Annexure I.

the impending attainment of freedom in August 1947, the question of the future of the Garden as a whole assumed considerable importance.

On account of the pressing and general demand of the Kanpur people, negotiations were undertaken by the Uttar Pradesh Government with the Society for the re-transfer of the Garden to them to be used on an object of general public utility. Pending finalization of the arrangements the Society was urged to remove, with effect from August 15, 1947 (the first Independence Day), the restriction on the entrance of the general public within the Garden and the Memorial proper and to do away with the entrance fee of two annas per head. The Society agreed and the Garden, which had remained more of less inaccessible to the general public, except by special efforts, for nearly ninety years, was thrown open to them on August 15, 1947, the day on which the country gained its freedom. An announcement to this effect was made by Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, then Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh, in his address to the people of Kanpur in Phoolbagh the same day.

It was unfortunate that some indisciplined behaviour was exhibited by certain miscreants on the opening of the Garden, and disrespect was shown to the Memorial proper. This action was condemned by the City Congress Committee in unequivocal terms in a press statement.* The Government also expressed their deep regret to the Society and undertook to assist in the arrangements for the immediate repair (without cost to the Society) of the damage done to the Memorial. The following are some of the observations made by the State Government in their letter to the Society :

" Government have since learnt with deep regret that some miscreants damaged the monuments and desecrated the tombs on August 15 . . . . The Government cannot too strongly condemn the conduct of the hooligans whose actions tend to bring the general public into disrepute. It is their desire and determination that the memorials of all sections and classes, particularly those to which sanctity is attached, should be protected. They are glad to note that the Kanpur City Congress Committee has already condemned the incidents in strong terms in a press statement."

QUESTIONS IN COUNCIL.

The restrictions imposed on Indian visitors were always a matter of controversy, and were never acceptable to Indian honour and Indian sentiment.

It was with a view to tide over this difficulty that the Garden had earlier been transferred by Government to the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens Society so that Government could always advance the plea that the Memorial, being the private property of a Society, it was the Society's 'prerogative' to make rules of its own for the admission of visitors.

Persons attired in *khaddar* had to face impediments in entering the Garden. Gandhi caps were forbidden. Prior to 1925, the passes issued for entry into the Garden sometimes contained a manuscript endorsement at the back to the effect that persons wearing Gandhi caps were not admitted to the Garden. This practice arose from the fact that prior to that year the students of one or two local colleges, who had been admitted to the Garden, it is reported, behaved in a manner not only inappropriate to the associations of the place, but as if they deliberately desired to annoy other visitors. The offending students had almost without exception been distinguished by wearing Gandhi caps. Similar incidents were now and then witnessed.

*The statement read: "We express our sorrow over the shameful incident which occurred in the Memorial Well Garden on August 15. Some uncultured miscreants not only tampered with the flowers and beautiful plants of the Garden but also damaged and desecrated certain tombs and the Memorial. The Memorial Well premises were got opened by the City Congress Committee on their own responsibility. The miscreants have not only put the Congress to shame but have also insulted the Indian culture. Such an act calls forth strong condemnation.

The Memorial Well and Garden are still private property owned by a private trust. The City Congress Committee publicly expresses its sorrow over this incident and assures the trust that the Congress will readily pay for the repairs. Our representative is meeting the trustees in this connection."

In connection with certain questions in the Council, it was, however, explained by Government on behalf of the Society that the restriction against wearing of Gandhi caps was not in any sense a general one, but was only imposed in the case of students of local educational institutions when it was feared that they would raise some sort of agitation within the precincts. By mistake, however, the offending note was endorsed also on certain passes meant for others, but there was no intention of making the prohibition a general one applicable to all Indians, because such a prohibition could not be justified. On the suggestion of Government, the Society agreed to withdraw the prohibition against the wearers of Gandhi cap, even against the students.

The following answer which was given by Government in the Legislative Council in 1925 illustrates the position regarding the wearers of Gandhi cap *vis-a-vis* the entrance to the Memorial Garden :

"The non-official Secretary of the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens has informed Government that the students of one or two local schools have, in the past, behaved in a manner not merely inappropriate to the associations of the place, but as if they desired to annoy other visitors. On three occasions (one in the presence of the Secretary himself) Gandhi caps were made prominent in such demonstrations. In October, the Secretary had to deal with an application from 80 persons connected with a local institution. After some hesitation he arranged that the applicants should enter in small parties and, to preclude a repetition of previous scenes, added a supplementary proviso that Gandhi caps were not to be worn. The proviso was, perhaps, unfortunately worded, but was not intended to be in any sense a general prohibition. The Government will now suggest to the Secretary that a proviso of this kind is undesirable."

Another incident which gave rise to interpellations in the Legislative Council occurred on December 27, 1925, at 10.00 a.m. A party* of Congress visitors forcibly entered the Garden without obtaining the usual passes. The members of the party disregarded the protest of the gateman who drew their attention to the rules that a pass was necessary ; the rules were displayed on a notice board at the gate. The District Magistrate received the information about an hour after the incident and, in consultation with Mr. Shakespeare, the President of the Governing Body, it was decided to close the gates of the Garden temporarily. The party was still inside when the gates were closed, but the members were allowed to go out soon afterwards when they desired to do so. Before leaving, they handed a pencilled note to the gateman signed by seven members of the party :

"We entered the Memorial Gardens in Indian dress in spite of the objection raised by the keeper."

The signatories to the note were :

(1) Dr. V. H. Rutherford, M.P. (England).

(2) Sri T. C. Goswami, M.L.A. (Bengal).

(3) Dewan Chaman Lal, M.L.A. (Lahore).

(4) Sri N. C. Chandar, M.L.C. (Bengal).

(5) Sri Nalini Ranjan Sarcar, M.L.A. (Bengal).

(6) Sri Bidhan Chandra Roy, M.L.C. (Bengal).

(7) Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhari, M.L.C. (Bengal).

Questions in connection with this incident were asked in the Legislative Council by Sri Damodar Das. They were answered by the Finance Member, Sir S. P. O'Donnell. The questions were three in number, but only a single reply was given :

"The Gardens in question are private property and managed by a private Society. One of the Society's rules requires that Indian visitors, who desire admission to the Gardens or to any of its enclosures, should first obtain a pass from the Secretary or from the Chaplain of Cawnpore (Cantonments) or the Chaplain of Christ Church (Civil Lines). Such passes are freely given. The Government are not concerned in the management of the Gardens. The party including the gentlemen named (i.e. named in the question) entered the Gardens against the rule quoted."

*The party consisted of 20 members—all Congressmen. They were at Kanpur in connection with the session of the Congress which was being held there.

Dr. Rutherford, however, was not an Indian and so the rule did not apply to him. The objection to his entrance, it appears, was taken because he was wearing a Gandhi cap.

RE-TRANSFER OF GARDEN TO GOVERNMENT.

In April 1947, the Society asked for the concurrence of Government in the transfer of a part of the Garden to the Kanpur Development Board possibly on account of financial stringency. While this proposal was already under consideration, the date of Indian Independence was approaching and the public of Kanpur had raised the question about the future of the Garden. The City Congress Committee in particular had suggested that since the Society found it difficult to maintain such a big Garden it should be taken over by Government and used for the general purposes of the public.

The Government then suggested to the Governors of the Society that "nobody can gain by perpetuating bitter memories, and a memorial of this type is not likely to advance the cause of Englishmen in any way in the new order in free India."

After protracted deliberations, it was decided that the Garden be transferred to the Government, with the exception of the Garden Cottage and its appurtenant land, etc., which were to be transferred to the Lucknow Diocesan Trust Association, an ecclesiastical body. The area transferred to the Association was approximately one-fourth of the total area.

Accordingly, a deed was drawn up in April 1949 and the re-transfer effected by its registration, whereupon the Garden reached a new and honourable phase in its history.

TRANSFER OF ANGEL

With the decision to re-transfer the Garden to the State Government, it was also unanimously decided by the Board of Governors that the Angel at the Well, the surrounding screen as also the grave-stones in the two cemeteries should be removed to a separate site within the compound of All-Souls Memorial Church in the Cantonment under the care of the Lucknow Diocesan Trust. This decision was soon carried out—*see* the deed dated April 20, 1949, regarding transfer of the Memorial to All-Souls Church, Kanpur—*Annexure II* at the end of this chapter.

The Government arranged at their own cost for a well in the compound of All-Souls Memorial Church to be properly fitted with electric pump and motor along with all necessary pipes, electric connection and the like, for the due maintenance of the compound of the Church to which the Angel, the tombstones and other stone work were transferred and re-erected.

The bungalow outside the boundary railing of the Garden was handed to the Lucknow Diocesan Trust with the object that its rent could be utilized for the up-keep and preservation of the re-erected Memorial in All-Souls Memorial Church.

Only the surface structures of the Memorial were removed to All-Souls Church in 1949. The Well itself was not re-dug, nor was the masonry platform (over the Well, on which had stood the Angel and the surrounding screen) dismantled. Similarly, the graves in the two cemeteries were not re-dug ; only the inscriptions which marked the spot of each grave were transferred to the compound of the Church. (The graves were earthen ones with no stone or masonry construction over them). The bones of the dead persons are thus still in their original place of rest.

NO CONTROVERSIES NOW.

The Memorial need not have been the subject of controversy during the days of the British ; it is to be regretted that it was. Since the dawn of civilization the dead are held in reverence in all countries, and in India particularly homage to the dead has almost acquired the shape of an institution. The Hindu has set aside a spell of fifteen days

in a year for propitiating the souls not only of his ancestors, but of all the dead of the world. Each day in the morning after a thorough wash-up he prays for the peace of the dead, offering water (mingled with seeds of rice, barley and black sesame), incense and sweet-smelling flowers. In this fortnight, as well as in the rest of the year, some days are earmarked for special offerings and oblations to his immediate ancestors. The Muslim also has his own methods for venerating the memory of the dead. It is, therefore, unthinkable that Indians would ever uphold the desecration of any place sacred to the memory of the dead, or of any memorial to which sanctity is attached.

The difficulty about this Memorial, however, arose from the fact that it did not seek so much to commemorate the sacred memory of the dead as it sought to keep fresh certain bitter memories of history—memories of which every Indian could not but feel ashamed. It was thus that the Memorial gave rise to bitterness, a consequence which could not have been in the contemplation of those who consecrated the place to the memory of the unfortunate men, women and children who were laid there.

However, these memories have now been wiped out by the graceful settlement which was arrived at in 1949 and in reaching which the Governors of the Society and the Diocesan Church Trust on the one hand and the Government of Uttar Pradesh on the other have all shown a spirit of accommodation, self-respect and large-heartedness. The Memorial now is at once an object of popular sanctity and a 'historical symbol' instead of a perpetual reminder of unpleasant incidents and cause of racial bitterness. "All's well that ends well", and so these dead, for whom all shall pray, are now resting in perfect peace and quietitude. *Nil nisi bonum.*

RE-NAMING OF THE GARDEN

The sacrifices made in 1857 by our countrymen in the great up-rising were not forgotten by a grateful people. On the achievement of Independence, the seeds of which were sown with the blood of innumerable men, women and children who suffered for the cause of the country, fitting memorials were raised all over the country. And to commemorate the name of one of the great heroes of the time—Tatya Tope—the Garden was re-named after him. It is now called Tatya Tope Memorial Garden (*Udyan*). His imposing life-size bust in bronze lends an air of solemnity to the precincts.

And thus has been restored to the Garden its rightful place in the history of our national struggle.



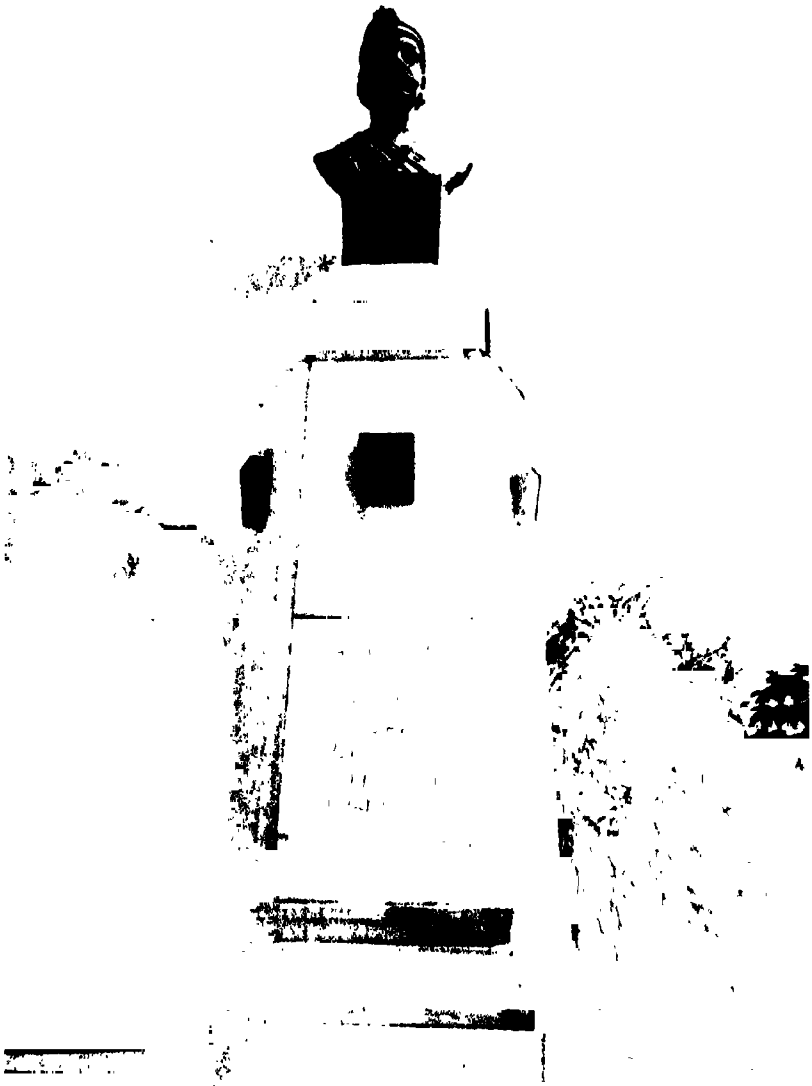
THE MEMORIAL WELL

THE SCREEN, WITH THE ANGEL INSIDE

(Now removed from the old site and to installed in the compound of All Souls' Church, Kanpur)

Below. THE ANGEL WITHIN THE SCREEN





TATYA TOPE MEMORIAL

Near the spot where the "Martyred Warrior" expired this imposing statue of Tatya Tope has been erected by the Uttar Pradesh Government. It stands in the midst of fine foliage and old banyan trees. These graceful surroundings lend an air of solemnity to the Memorial which is visited by numbers of people every day.

ANNEXURE I

OLD RULES FOR ADMISSION TO THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

I. The Gardens which surround the Well containing the remains of those who were massacred at Cawnpore in the month of July 1857 shall be known as the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens.

II. The Gardens, the Well surmounted by the Memorial, and the enclosed burial grounds are the property of a society styled the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens, and their management is vested in the Board of Governors of the Society.

III. It is expected that all who seek admission to the Gardens will bear in mind the character of the place and the events with which it is connected and will abstain from acts of an unbecoming nature.

IV. The following acts are prohibited within the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens:

1. Riding or driving at a rapid pace.
2. Holding parties of pleasure, such as picnics and the playing of games of any kind.
3. The playing of music.
4. The bringing in of dogs. (These, if secured, may be left in charge of the gate-keeper).
5. The introduction of hackney carriages.
6. The picking of flowers or the breaking of plants.

V. The Gardens shall be open from sunrise to 7 p.m. from March to October, and to 6 p.m. from November to February.

VI. The Memorial Well shall be opened during the following hours:

1st April to 15th October { 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

16th October to 31st March - 8 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

VII. Indian visitors who desire admission to the Gardens or to any of its enclosures should first obtain a pass from the Secretary or from the Chaplain of Cawnpore (Cantonments) or the Chaplain of Christ Church (Civil Lines).

VIII. European children under 10 years of age shall not be admitted unless in the company of adult relatives or European attendants.

By order of the Governors,

CAWNPORE: J. G. RYAN,
1st April, 1920. *Secretary.*

NOTE—These rules were amended by the Society in 1938. The amendments provided that turn-stiles would be set up and that all visitors, whether Europeans or Indians, will be charged a small amount (two annas) for admission, the amount thus collected to be devoted to the up-keep and improvement of the Gardens. Certain categories of persons—such as the original donees, their nominees—and soldiers, whether British or Indian and the Police, were exempt from the payment.

Further, to the Memorial proper, viz. the memorial within the screen, and the two adjoining burial grounds, none except Christians could enter without special permission from the Honorary Secretary of the Society or his Deputy.

ANNEXURE II

DEED DATED APRIL 20, 1949, LAYING DOWN THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS ON WHICH THE MEMORIAL RE-ERECTED IN THE COMPOUND OF ALL-SOULS CHURCH, KANPUR, SHALL BE MAINTAINED BY THE LUCKNOW DIOCESAN TRUST

This INDENTURE made on the twentieth day of April 1949 BETWEEN the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens, Kanpur—a Society registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, with its registered office at Kanpur (hereinafter called "the Society") of the first part AND the Governor of the United Provinces (hereinafter called "the Governor") of the second part AND the Lucknow Diocesan Trust Association, a Company registered under the Indian Companies Act, 1913, with its registered head office at 4, Queen's Road, Allahabad, and a Branch Office at 16/48 Civil Lines, Kanpur (hereinafter called "the Company") of the third part;

WHEREAS by an Indenture dated the First day of August, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen, made between the Secretary of State for India in Council and the Society, the premises ordinarily known as the Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens, then described in the records of the Municipal Board, Kanpur, as premises nos. 16/16 and 16/16-A and now described in the records of the Cantonment Authority, Kanpur, as premises Nos. 1/A and 143 and more fully described in detail in annexures 'A', 'B' and 'C'* attached to these presents were transferred and conveyed unto the Society by the Secretary of State for India in Council with a view to the preservation and maintenance thereof;

*Not printed.

AND WHEREAS *owing to the Constitutional changes taking place in the country, the Society have by another* indenture made on the Twentieth day of April one thousand nine hundred and forty-nine retransferred and reconveyed the area of 40 acres zero rood and 5 poles of the aforesaid Cawnpore Memorial Well Gardens recorded as No. 1/A in the books of the Cantonment Authority, Kanpur, to the Governor, absolutely for ever, and have with the concurrence of the Governor consented to transfer the remaining area measuring 2 acres, 1 rood and 2 poles recorded as no. 143 in the House-tax Register of Cantonment Authority, Kanpur, to the Company, for the purpose of utilising the income therefrom on the preservation and maintenance of the Memorial and Tomb stones to be removed from the Kanpur Memorial Well Gardens;*

AND WHEREAS the Company has agreed to the utilisation and preservation and maintenance of the Memorial and Tombs as aforesaid upon terms and conditions as hereinafter set forth;

NOW THIS DEED WITNESSES as follows:

1. That the property, i.e all that piece of land measuring 2 acres 1 rood and 2 poles now existing outside the railings surrounding the Memorial Well Gardens in the North-west, more fully described in Annexure 'B'† attached to these presents with all the main buildings, out houses, stables, garages, waterways and electric fittings and other appurtenances along with the accompanying rights of easements (hereinafter mentioned as "the said premises') be and is hereby granted and conveyed to the Company TO HOLD the same unto the Company on the terms and conditions hereinafter contained.

2. That the Company shall pay all local, provincial and Central Government taxes and cesses to which the property hereby granted and conveyed is either now subjected or which may be imposed upon it hereafter.

3. That the bungalow and its out-houses, garages, stables, etc., which are now in the tenancy of the British India Corporation Ltd. may continue to be let to them on any amount as may be agreed upon.

4. That the Company shall be bound to utilise any income derived from the said premises over repairs and maintenance of the said premises and shall be further bound properly to preserve and maintain the Memorial and Tomb-stones, etc. which are to be removed from the said Memorial Well Gardens to All-Souls Memorial Church, Kanpur Cantonment.

5. That the grant hereby made shall continue in force so long as the Company does not commit a breach of the conditions contained in paragraph 4 or the object for which the grant is made has not ceased.

6. That the value of the property hereby transferred for the purposes of stamp duty is fixed at rupee one.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF Sir Robert Menzies, Chairman, and Arthur Reginald Stewart, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer for and on behalf of the Society, Kishan Chand, Collector and District Magistrate, Kanpur, for and on behalf of the Governor, and the Principal Officer of the Company in charge of the Kanpur Branch Office for and on behalf of the Company have signed this deed and the common seal of the Company has been affixed on the day and year first above written.

For and on behalf of the Society	For and on behalf of the Governor	For and on behalf of the Company
R. MENZIES, *Chairman.*	K. CHAND, *Collector and District Magistrate, Kanpur.*	(Sd.) (ILLEGIBLE), *Principal Officer in Kanpur.*

(Seal of Lucknow
Diocesan Trust Association,
Kanpur, 1924)

Registered at no. 644 with its original at no. 643 in Book No. 1, Volume 1468, on pages 180 to 186, on April 23, 1949.

*This has not been printed. Its substance has, however, been given in the above clause. That deed also contains an important stipulation namely that the Government would not allow any kind of building to be erected on those spots at which the "Well" and the two cemeteries had previously existed. The exact words as contained in clause 5 of it read: "5—That the transferee (Governor) covenants with the transferor (Memorial Well Society) that he would not allow any building of any kind type or description to be built upon that particular part of the area on which now (that is before dismantling) stand the said Well and the two cemeteries and further that the said part of the area shall never be used or allowed to be used for any purpose other than that of a public park.

†This too has not been printed.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

AND THAT WELL AT AJNALA

The Memorial Well at Kanpur in which were thrown the dead bodies of English women and children in July 1857, had a grim parallel, but with a difference, in the Punjab at a place known as Ajnala in the district of Amritsar. In a well at Ajnala were thrown by village sweepers the bodies of Indian sepoys of the 26th Native Infantry. The tragic circumstances in which Mr. Frederick Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, perpetrated this gruesome deed may be briefly narrated.

In the Punjab were posted a number of Indian regiments of which the 26th Native Infantry was one. This regiment consisted of Purbias, that is, persons hailing from the Uttar Pradesh side and the surrounding areas. Between these Purbia sepoys and the Sikh regiments there were feelings of bitterness, the reasons being historical. The Purbia sepoys in the Punjab were thus in hostile surroundings.

The news of the uprising at Meerut and Delhi reached Lahore soon after the occurrence. On the ground of suspicion about their loyalty, the Indian Infantry regiments in the Punjab (with the exception of the Sikh regiments) were disarmed. This was done on the morning of May 12, at the Mian-Mir Cantonment where a parade was held and where along with the 26th Native Infantry were also disarmed the 16th and the 46th Native Infantries and the 8th Native Cavalry. No prior notice of the contemplated disarming was given and when the sepoys formed ranks on the parade they discovered that there were loaded guns round them. They were told that they were being disarmed in the interest of preserving their reputation. The sepoys quietly threw away their arms and thus 2,500 men were rendered armless and marched off to their lines in the escort of 600 Europeans.

We are concerned here only with the 26th Native Infantry which remained in the Mian-Mir Camp without arms and so was harmless. The disarmed sepoys were not allowed to go home as it was feared that they might turn rebels. They were thus in a state of virtual confinement in the camp. Fearing a worse fate they were naturally anxious to get away. On July 30, their opportunity came and they fled the camp. Major Spencer, who tried to obstruct their flight, was, in the melee, killed by hatchets and knives—the only weapons the disarmed sepoys had. Similarly was killed the Sergeant-Major who came to the assistance of Spencer. A dust-storm which arose at that moment provided cover to the fugitives who disappeared in an unknown direction.

The next day the Tahsildar of Ajnala, who came to know of their whereabouts, attacked them with a police force and killed 150 of the unarmed and hunger-striken fugitives. Thereafter, Frederick Cooper, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, with a party of horsemen, arrived and found them crowded in a miserable condition in an island in a river. They were tightly secured with ropes and brought ashore. Some of them drowned themselves in despair in the river and thus found a more agreeable death than that whch awaited their captured comrades. Two hundred and eighty-two prisoners were thus brought to Ajnala. Frederick Cooper considered all of them to be murderers, and unjustly decided to hang them. But as night

had fallen, the executions were postponed for the next morning, and for the purpose of hanging a large supply of rope was ordered. For the night, the prisoners were confined in a small room in the Tehsil building.

The following morning when the hangings were to commence it was found that the supply of rope was insufficient for so many of the culprits, whereupon Frederick Cooper decided to have them shot in small batches. This was done and 150 of the helpless victims were thus executed in cold blood for no offence other than the attempt to escape and the death of two British officers whom they had killed in self-defence. These officers had been killed by some of the flying sepoys whom they had tried to intercept.

After the execution of the above number, one of the executing soldiers swooned away, he being the oldest member of the firing party. In the result, the firing was for a while suspended. On the firing being resumed, 87 more were done to death making a total of 237, still leaving 45 men within the small room. It was then found that the remainder would not come out. Preparations for entering the room were made after taking precautions against resistance or attempts at escape. But it was little expected that an awful fate had befallen the rest of the prisoners, for when the door was opened a ghastly sight was seen. They had all died or nearly died during the night. These unfortunate persons had anticipated their doom by a few hours and had died of heat, fatigue and suffocation.

Under the orders of the dishonourable Cooper the 45 bodies "were dragged into light, and consigned, in common with all the other bodies, into one common pit, by the hands of village sweepers.*"

Such was the end of these innocent sepoys at the hands of a cruel Englishman who later boasted of "the clemency and the justice of the British."*

It is a pity that high British officers instead of raising a finger against the brutal deed of Frederick Cooper should have showered approbation on his action. So wrote Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab : "I congratulate you on your success against the 26th Native Infantry. You and your police acted with much energy and spirit and deserve well of the State." Robert Montgomery went on to applaud Cooper by saying, "All honours to you for what you have done and right well you did it." This murder of helpless victims was also praised by Rice Holmes who considered this act as a "splendid assumption of responsibility."† But sober Englishmen were not slow to condemn Cooper in strong terms.**

The pit referred to by Cooper was an old dilapidated well near the Tehsil building. After the bodies had been thrown in, it was covered with earth and a sort of mound came into existence reminding the people of the pitiable tragedy.

While at the Well at Kanpur a magnificent and costly memorial was raised by the British at the expense of the Indian tax-payer, the Well at Ajnala remained a neglected place ; only an earthen mound marked the spot where 282 innocent Indian sepoys were buried after having been done to death by bullet and suffocation. The question of putting up a suitable memorial there was, some time ago, being considered by the Punjab Government.

* Cooper, pp. 162-63

†*History of the Indian Mutiny*, p. 363.

** The perverted Rice Holmes went to the extent of characterising the protests of these Englishmen as the "hysterical cries of ignorant humanitarians"—*ibid.*

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT

SOME GENERAL REFLECTIONS

A. MERCIFUL INDIANS

B. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

C. THE STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT

A. MERCIFUL INDIANS

Thomson, Delafosse*, Murphy and Sullivan were four amongst the few Englishmen who had managed to escape death at Sattichaura Ghat. The boat in which they had escaped was later grounded in the bed of the Ganga, but they were keeping themselves on the river in order to be safe from the rebellious villagefolk on the bank. They had been in a miserable condition for some three days and were now despairing their life.

It was in this condition that these fugitives were befriended by certain villagers who gave them shelter at great risk to their own lives from the turbulent country-side. They were received kindly and provided with every comfort respecting food and rest. They were then taken to Thakur Drigvijay Singh, the taluqdar of Murarmau. As they passed through the villages peasants offered them milk and sweetmeats. The Raja of Murarmau protected them in his fort for three weeks. Their wounds were dressed by the village doctor. They were provided with clothing and given meals thrice a day. The Raja's wife sent her servants constantly to ask for their welfare. But they were forbidden to go outside the walls as the vicinity was infested with rebels of whom some were inside the Raja's fort too.

Such was the hospitality shown in the true traditional style to these fugitives whom the kind Raja had taken under his mercy.†

There were numerous instances of a similar kind in which Indians showed their inherent hospitality in giving shelter to Englishmen in distress. Charles Ball has referred** to a case of some white people running for life pursued by rebellious people with intent to kill. At that moment a village family came forward to intercept the pursuers, telling them that these fugitives had just dined with Rajputs and that, therefore, even though the fugitives were heartless enemies, there could be no question of killing them.

There were cases in which village women saved the lives of the children of fugitive Europeans by painting them black and dressing them in Indian clothes to hide their identity. The nobles of Avadh, where the uprising was most fierce, were particularly generous to the English found running for

* Sir Claude F. Delafosse, the grand-son of this gentleman served in the Education Department of the U. P. Government rising to the post of Director of Public Instruction and later became the Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University. Sir Claude, in gratitude for the goodness done to his grandfather, used to show great respect to the deacendants of the village headman who had saved the fugitives.

† Trevelyan's *Cawnpore*, pages 264–269

** *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I.

shelter here and there. Forrest acknowledges the benevolence of the people of Avadh in treating Englishmen in their misfortune with incomparable generosity.

Indian followers and attendants counted by many hundreds shared the misfortunes of the British officers, whom they were serving, and their wives. Oswell paying a tribute to them observes that they "displayed throughout a devotion and a constancy that has been well described as unparalleled in the records of any nation." He goes on to quote the case of a British regiment which was asked to name a person amongst them whom they considered most worthy of the Victoria Cross, an honour which the Commander-in-Chief proposed to confer on the regiment for its gallantry. And the person whom the members of the regiment unanimously selected for the honour was no other than the regimental *bhishti*. "The deeds of these men have in the main been left unrecorded, and their bodies rest in un-named graves, but they were none-the-less heroes, and their deeds will ever be written in the hearts not only of their own countrymen in India but of Englishmen."*

B. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

A remarkable feature of the uprising was the deep sense of national brotherhood which united the Muslims and the Hindus in the common cause of expelling the foreign rulers from Indian soil. There were no communal feelings either amongst the sepoys or amongst the Indian chiefs, landholders and the common people who as one man rose against the mighty empire. The Muslims rose, fought and suffered as much as, if not even more than, their Hindu brethren.

Before the advent of the British there was no such thing in India as Hindu-Muslim problem. It is true that during the mediaeval period most of the invaders from the north-west professed the faith of the Prophet, but they came not to attack a non-Muslim population, but to a country reputed for its wealth and prosperity. Those of the conquerors who made India their home made no discrimination against the Hindus -perhaps the only instance of such discrimination is to be found in the latter part of the reign of Aurangzeb when certain special taxes were levied exclusively on the Hindu population. Even so, it must be recorded to his credit that he made assignments to Hindu shrines and Hindu saints as well. (Here we can leave out of account the plunder and destruction of temples, which blackened the name of some of the Muslim invaders and rulers—an explanation for this is to be found in factors other than in the untenable theory of discrimination against the Hindu population as a whole. For the same reason the proselytising activities of some Muslim rulers have to be left out of account for separate discussion.)

The rulers of India professing the Muslim faith freely employed Hindus in important and confidential positions—the treasurers of these rulers were almost invariably Hindus. Conversely, Hindu rulers did not hesitate to place confidence in Muslims. Aurangzeb had many Hindu generals to fight for his empire. Shivaji had his Muslim commanders and soldiers and even on his personal staff he had Muslims who were no less trustworthy than men of his own community. The famous artillery expert, Ibrahim Gardi, fought as an Artillery Commander on the side of the Marathas against Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat. In short, Indian history is full of instances many of which are touching examples of what the Muslims did

* Oswell, Vol. I, page XX of the Introduction.

for the Hindus and the Hindus did for the Muslims.

The British found that they could not establish their superiority in India unless resort was had to some high policy of State or to some stratagem. They found that the policy of "divide and rule" would be helpful in consolidating their power and they did not hesitate to introduce it wherever possible. But the result of their attempts, as the events of 1857 proved, was only skin-deep. In the fight of 1857 there were no dissensions amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. The whole struggle was imbued with feelings of brotherhood—a national struggle in the fullest meaning of that expression.

The Hindus and the Muslims alike spontaneously proclaimed Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of India and accepted his suzerainty. The Rani of Jhansi, the Nana Saheb and all others had declared their allegiance to the Emperor and acted in his name as his agents or governors. The Emperor on his part conducted himself as a national sovereign as is borne out, amongst other things, by one of his proclamations which included these words : "A devout Hindu would respect a devout Muslim and a devout Muslim would honour a pious Hindu."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his Foreword to Dr. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-seven* has laid stress on this aspect of the struggle. He says that Hindu-Muslim unity exhibited during the struggle was a spontaneous one which had its roots in the friendly relations between the communities which had developed on a permanent basis as a result of common life for centuries. There was no occasion or need for the leaders of the revolt to make any appeal for unity in this cause. This is how the Maulana Saheb states the position in his own emphatic words : "The movement started on May 10, 1857, and continued for about two years. During this period there were many glorious as well as dark deeds perpetrated by combatants on either side. There are instances of shining heroism and almost unbelievable cruelty. We do not, however, find during the whole of this period, a single instance when there was a clash or conflict on a communal basis. All Indians—whether Muslim or Hindu—looked at things from the same point of view and judged events by the same standards."

C. THE STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT

In judging the actions of Indian soldiers who took part in the revolt one has to apply the standards which prevailed in those days. Thus, in 1857 there were no Geneva Conventions relating to prisoners of war and the treatment of wounded soldiers. It is on record that General Wheeler fighting from within the entrenchment at Kanpur had immediately put to death any Indian soldier belonging to the rebel side who fell into his hands. His explanation was that he had neither arrangements nor space for keeping the captives as prisoners of war, nor was it politic to do so. In this connexion Captain Mowbray Thomson, who was one of the besieged, has recorded that it was a terrible war that recognized no past conventions or humane law, and neither party would spare a prisoner. The first prisoner taken by the besieged managed to escape. "It was not desirable", says Thomson, "that very frequent accounts of our destitute condition should be conveyed to the rebels ; so in future to remedy this evil, all we took were despatched without reference to Headquarters."*

British writers have found no fault with these and similar actions on the part of European commanders in the war of 1857. But those very writers have been critical of comparable actions on the part of Indian leaders and commanders. The object of the nationalist forces in taking up arms against the British

*Thomson, page 75.

Government was to expel a foreign power from Indian soil. With this end in view, the taking and maintenance of prisoners belonging to the British nationality would have been inconsistent with the purpose for which the war was being waged. As regards attacks on, and destruction of, British civilians it is to be remembered that these could not be treated in isolation and as separate from the British army, because civilian European officers were also capable of bearing arms and were actually taking part in the hostilities. And at all events, they were potential soldiers and had to be dealt with accordingly. The British writers could not, therefore, in fairness to Indians, apply one standard to Englishmen and another to Indians.

Much criticism has been levelled against Nana Saheb for his treatment of British prisoners taken at the Sattichaura Ghat. So far as their maintenance is concerned it has been proved by evidence that they were being fed regularly and that they were not required to do hard labour although some unproved suggestions were made that the ladies were required to grind gram. The treatment thus meted out to them by Nana Saheb was quite in conformity even with the present-day Geneva Conventions, although those conventions had not been then heard of. Under the present Conventions a prisoner of war is to be properly fed, and not be subjected to hard labour. Nana Saheb treated the prisoners thus, even without the sanction of the Geneva Conventions. Taking any view of the matter, this must be recorded to his credit.

As against this, mention should be made of the treatment accorded to Indian prisoners taken by the British. It is in evidence that they were mercilessly hanged *en masse* without trial. Many were tied to the end of cannon to be blown off, and many were shot in cold blood. Compared with the atrocities committed by the British army and civilian officers in the name of a progressive country, the actions of Indian nationalist leaders pale into insignificance.

Why were the massacres at Kanpur and other places committed ? Violence can never be justified. And violence when it goes to the extent of killing innocent men, women and children has no justification under any circumstances. But this is true only when we are dealing with moral judgment and moral responsibility. Actually, what happens is that when passions of a multitude are excited, the faculty of judgment is lost and terrible deeds are done. This is particularly so when a people have remained under the oppression of another race. Again, when a mass of people are caught by the fear that their religion is being attacked, that they are in danger of being converted to another religion, by trick or subtlety, they wait for an opportune moment to rise against those who hold sway over them. And when they rise, feelings of bitterness, hatred and revenge reach the maximum limit. It is in such a state of mind that brutal deeds are committed even by persons not disposed to evil. Examples of this are numerous in history ; they took place in every region and country.

Some parallels.

We have thus Brutus rising against Caesar. The people of England similarly rose against their King, Charles I, and beheaded him. We have Cromwell of England causing terrible bloodshed and taking cruel vengeance on the Irish people with the object of subduing their country. History records how Cromwell was enraged at the sturdy patriotism of the Irish, how he cut to pieces helpless women—not sparing the infants in their arms.

The unfortunate incident involving the killing of English women and children in Kanpur was not a cold-blooded act on the part of the sepoys. They were filled with passion on account of the extreme excitement and hatred against the English for the oppression

which they had been committing for a long time, *for the inroads into religion* which they were practising with dexterity, for the inhuman cruelties which had been committed by Neill and his associates on innocent Indians at Allahabad, Fatehpur and Varanasi. The sepoys were thus filled with extreme indignation against the very name of the English. The massacre, though morally wholly unjustified in any circumstances, is to be viewed in this context.

When the sepoys of Kanpur, who were captured in the battle of the Kali river near Kanpur, were being mounted on the scaffold an officer asked them the reason why they had massacred English women and children. Their reply was : " Does anyone kill a snake and leave its off-spring alive. " The sepoys also used to say : " To extinguish the fire and leave the spark, to kill a snake and preserve its young, is not the wisdom of the wise."

We have the example of the massacre of the Turks by the Greeks in 1821 when 21,000 Turkish peasants—men, women and children —were put to whole-sale massacre. The explanation was that the Turkish population in Greece was too small to be kept within the country and too big to be removed outside ; therefore, to kill them all was "a necessary measure of wise policy."

The Articles of the United Nations Charter prohibiting genocide have been necessitated *by historical facts such as these.*

Sir William Russell, the famous correspondent of the *London Times* has made certain observations regarding the Kanpur massacre in his *Diary* at page 164. He writes : "We who suffered from it think that there never was such wickedness in the world ; and the incessant efforts of a gang of forgerers and utterly base scoundrels have surrounded it with horrors that have been vainly invented in the hope of adding to the indignation and burning desire for vengeance which hatred failed to arouse. Helpless garrisons surrendering without condition have been massacred ere now........Risings, such as that of ....the actors in the Sicilian Vespers*, of the assassins who smote and spared none on the eve of St. Bartholomew,† have been over and over attended by inhuman cruelties, violation and tortures. The history of mediaeval Europe affords many instances of crimes as great as those of Cawnpore. The history of more civilised periods could afford some parallel to them in more modern times and amidst most civilised nations. In fact, the peculiar aggravation of the Cawnpore massacres was this that the deed was done by a subject-race, by black men who dared to shed the blood of their masters and that of poor helpless ladies and children. Here we had not only a servile war and a sort of Jacquerie‡ combined, but

* A vesper bell is a bell rung in churches to summon worshippers to vespers, the evening prayer. Because in 1282 the vesper bell gave the signal for the massacre of Frenchmen, this massacre is known in history as the Sicilian Vespers. It took place in Sicily which was then under the rule of the French who treated the natives with great cruelty and immorality. The national feelings of the Sicilians were ultimately roused and the insult done to a Sicilian girl by a Frenchman exasperated them. They hastily and secretly met, fixed a signal and when the vesper bell rang on March 30, 1282, the Sicilians fell upon the French assembled for their vespers. Four thousand Frenchmen, including many priests, were killed in a single day.

†This massacre took place in France on the eve of St. Bartholomew's Day, August 23, 1572, when the people were *busy observing the festival. At that time there were two powerful families in France one under the leader of the* Catholics, the other under the Protestants. The Catholics murdered nearly a thousand Protestants when they were busy at their prayers on a day in 1563. A war of religions was started which continued up to 1570. Later, through a court conspiracy the young king of France, Charles IX, was made to give his consent for a general massacre of the Protestants. The day chosen was the one above mentioned when a bell would ring from the Palace Church and the massacre would start. The terrible slaughter went on throughout the night when men, women and children, some 4,000 in number, were brutally slaughtered. The massacre continued for several days in the provinces and about another 10,000 were killed. All that was shameful, dastardly and inhuman was done.

‡This word is derived from French history and connotes the rising of peasants against cruel landlords. In 1358, a French peasant, William by name, called himself Jacques (the French nickname for peasant) and led a rebellion of peasants against the oppressive nobles. The rebellion was, however, soon crushed, but from 'Jacques', the term Jacquerie began to be used in the sense indicated.

we had a war of religion, a war of race, and a war of revenge, of hate, of some national promptings to shake off the yoke of a stranger and to re-establish the full power of native chiefs and the full sway of native religions."

Cruel necessity.

"Cruel necessity" were the words Oliver Cromwell murmured on seeing the beheaded body of King Charles I who had been executed on January 30, 1649, after a trial conducted under the authority of Parliament. Cromwell had a hand in the capture of the King and in starting the trial. After the execution, he visited the King's body in the middle of the night and there silently uttered the words above quoted. There was no doubt that the execution was a cruel one,* but as to its necessity historians are still disagreed.

During the 'mutiny' too, there were many abhorrent deeds committed by the mutineers, and many others committed by the British. The latter have sought to bring their deeds under the category of 'cruel necessity'. There is no reason why the actions of the Indians too should not be viewed in the same light and excused on the same ground.

Turn not to repose in sleep till thou hast taken account with thy soul of three things: whether thou hast that day committed any wrong; whether that day thou hast gained any knowledge; whether any previous achievement has perished by neglect.

—Aristotle to Alexander.

*It was a cold day, snow having fallen, and so the condemned King put on his warm under-clothes to safeguard against shivering on the scaffold—shivering which, the King thought, the on-lookers might incorrectly ascribe to fear of approaching death. He met his death in a dignified manner and assisted the executioner in arranging his hair under a cap so that the neck may be fully exposed to the stroke of the axe. He then laid himself upon the block, gave his own signal whereupon the executioner, in a single stroke, severed the King's head. According to custom, the executioner held up the head for the people to see. Then "there was such a groan by the thousands then present", wrote a contemporary diarist, "as I never heard before, and desire I may never hear again.

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

GROWTH OF NATIONALISM; MAHATMA GANDHI SHOWS THE WAY

A. RESULTS OF THE REVOLT

B. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ; FREEDOM ACHIEVED THROUGH MAHATMA GANDHI

ANNEXURE—CHRONOLOGY OF THE CONGRESS

जागे शहीद सुख निंदिया से, भागती देख अन्याय रात,
ले रहा जन्म संसार नया, आया हंसता जीवन प्रभात ;
आओ मिलकर निर्माण करें, वैभव प्राचीन विलीन हुए,
सुन्दर भविष्य है भारत का, स्वाधीन हुए, स्वाधीन हुए।

A. RESULTS OF THE REVOLT

After the restoration of authority, the British made many changes in their policy towards India. The Cabinet in England was now left in no doubt that, unless a new attitude was adopted, it would not be possible to hold this large sub-continent with the limited number of European soldiers available for service in India even assuming that the country could be held on the strength of English bayonets. So they designed a policy by which, without the need of a large European army, they could rule over their Indian empire.

In the first place, the rulers created vested interests and sought to protect them. The princes and landholders were an important link in the chain of these interests. During the time of the East India Company, the princes were being gradually eliminated so as to bring larger territories under direct British rule. This policy was now abandoned and Indian rulers were guaranteed their principalities with the right to adopt. Big landholders owed loyalty to the Government because they could maintain their position only under the protecting wings of the foreign power. The princes and taluqdars thus became the main support of British rule.

There were then the Indian members of the services, now a class by themselves. After the revolt, Indians came to be recruited in large numbers because the Government had found that Indian officials had served the Company well and could be relied upon. Though kept only in subordinate positions, they formed a block of loyal persons interested in the continuance of British rule under which they were flourishing.

In the army, which was now re-organised, tribal and communal loyalties and selections were encouraged and for this purpose groups were formed amongst Indian soldiers. Popular newspapers were kept away from Indian troops and other measures adopted so as to isolate the Indian section of the army from the Indian people. All this had the basic motive of preventing any sentiment of national unity taking seed in the country's troops.

As if all this was not enough, encouragement was given to fissiparous tendencies in the body politic of the country and reactionary elements received support. Religion and provincialism were ready instruments by which disintegrating tendencies could be nurtured, and full advantage of this was taken by the authorities. The conservative elements in society also received support. Endeavours at social improvement through legislation and otherwise were simply not countenanced.

In order to co-ordinate all these measures to prevent the growth of Indian nationalism, the administrators adopted the attitude of superiority complex, the idea of a master race, a race fitted to rule over other countries. However, these attempts at disrupting unity and nationalism amongst the Indian people brought only temporary results. For, the foundation of the Indian National Congress, and all that it stood for, was not now far off.

B. INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ; FREEDOM ACHIEVED THROUGH MAHATMA GANDHI

The uprising of 1857 had proved the futility of physical force against the powerful British arms. In suppressing the 'Mutiny', the rulers had also suppressed all future possibilities of armed insurrection against established authority by pursuing the policy of '*divide et impera*'. But the crushing of India's physical might still left the way open for constitutional agitation against the faults of British rule, against the evils of foreign rule itself. A spirit now began to grow in favour of self-rule or, to use a more effective expression then in vogue, 'Home Rule'. The role of organising a freedom struggle on these lines was taken up by the Indian National Congress formally founded in 1885.

A. O. Hume.

Amongst the many remarkable features of British association with India, there was this one, namely the foundation of the Congress by an Englishman—and an Englishman who had been in the civil service of the Company and of the Crown for the long period of 33 years. This remarkable person was Allan Octavian Hume, C. B., who is justly styled as the *Father of the Indian National Congress.*

Allan Hume had joined the Bengal Civil Service in 1849 at his 20th year. Before his service ran into 9 years, the 'Mutiny' had broken out, and as a District Officer at Etawah he then showed his capabilities both as a civilian and as a soldier. Hume had an eventful career as a District Officer, a Commissioner of Customs, a Secretary to the Government of India, first in the Home Department and then in a newly-organised Department of Revenue and Agriculture (1870—1879). He, however, preferred to sacrifice that coveted and formidable position in which he had constant access to the Viceroy in the cool climate of Simla, rather than accept a policy which prevented men of rigid principles and unselfish candour, as he undoubtedly was, becoming the responsible advisers of Viceroys. (It is recorded that his displacement was due to the expression of his views with great freedom without regard to what may be the wishes or intentions of his superiors. If he believed a particular policy to be wrong, he opposed it without hesitation, using plain language in expressing his views). From the heights of Simla he then came down to the Board of Revenue at Allahabad in 1879 and retired from service in 1882.

After retiring from service Hume settled down in Simla and started a newspaper under the title of *People's Friend.* On March 1, 1883, he wrote a letter to his friends in India, emphasising the necessity of forming a political party and asking them to select 20 true friends of India as a nucleus. Over two years later, on Decemebr 28, 1885, a



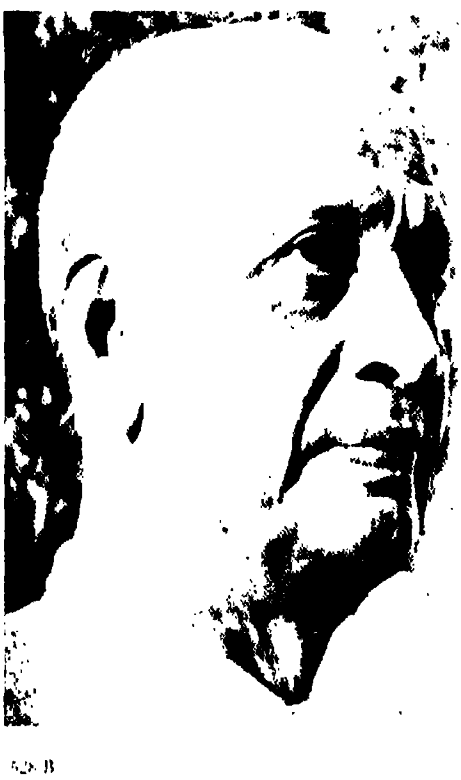
I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists.—The FATHER OF THE NATION



ALLAN OCTAVIAN HUME, C. B.

He had [illegible] from the [illegible] that [illegible] were not for battle but for [illegible]. He was instinctively [illegible] accord with the Indian people [illegible] and [illegible]. It pained his soul [illegible] that the West should deny to the East the [illegible] of freedom which should be the common heritage of both. [illegible] the [illegible] Secretary to the Government of India, founded a great organisation and [illegible] rightly [illegible] as the

FATHER OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.



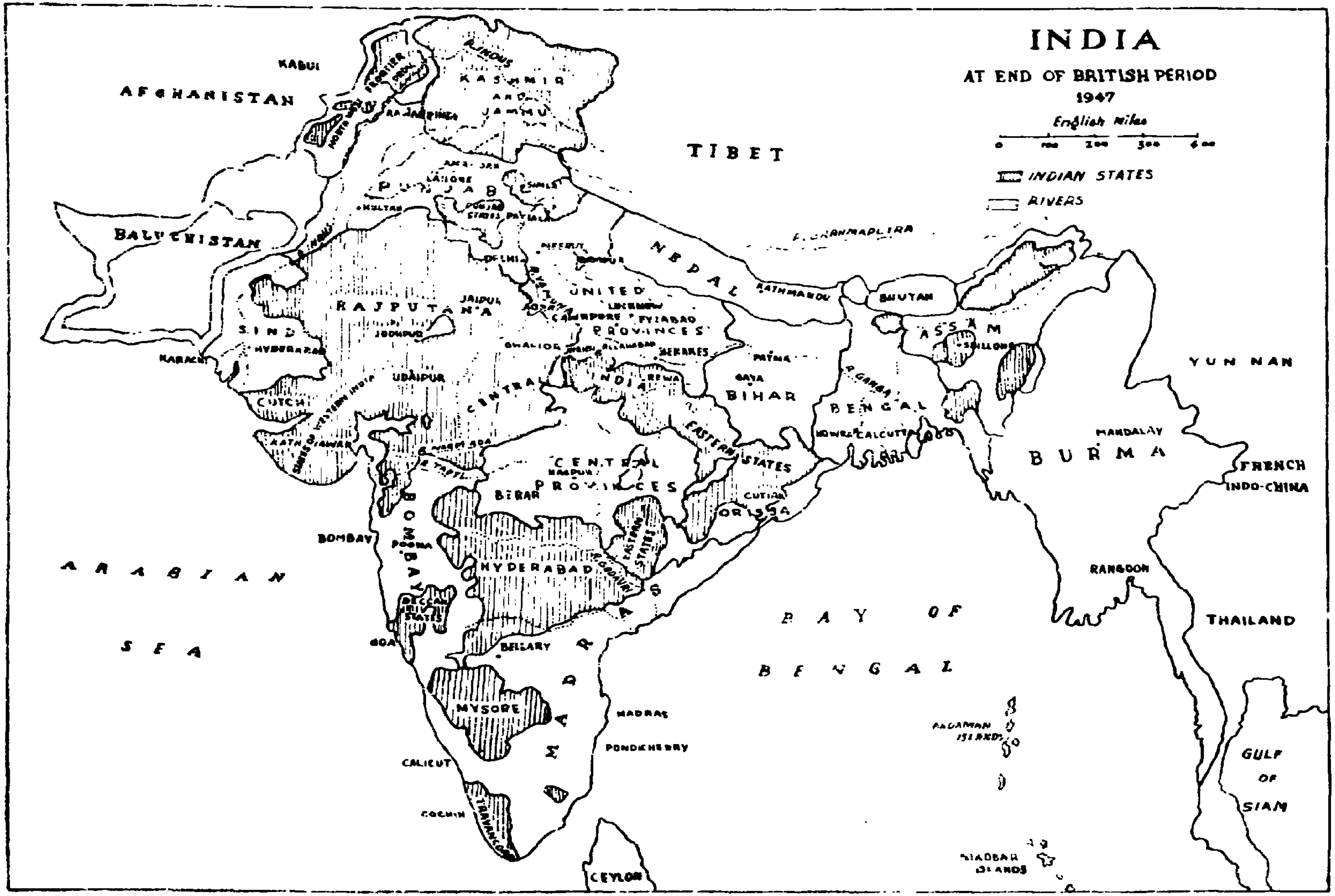
SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

Independence has been achieved by the efforts and sacrifices of many, but to a single man Sardar Patel belongs the credit for the unification of free India. This man of extraordinary courage and decision saved the country from disintegration following the lapse of paramountcy over the former princely States announced by the British Government in the Indian Independence Act 1947. By it the suzerainty of the British Crown over the Indian States lapsed, and with it lapsed also the treaties between the Crown and the Rulers of those States.



PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

At the inauguration of the FLAME OF LIBERTY—the martyrs' memorial at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar Prime Minister Nehru reminded the people of the basic necessities of unity and the emotional integration of the nation.


INDIA
AT END OF BRITISH PERIOD
1947
English Miles
0 100 200 300 400
INDIAN STATES
RIVERS
TIBET
AFGHANISTAN
KABUL
BALUCHISTAN
KASHMIR AND JAMMU
PUNJAB
LAHORE
PATIALA
SIMLA
DELHI
MEERUT
RAJPUTANA
JAIPUR
JODHPUR
UDAIPUR
SIND
HYDERABAD
KARACHI
CUTCH
KATHIAWAR
NEPAL
KATHMANDU
UNITED PROVINCES
LUCKNOW
CAWNPORE
FYZABAD
ALLAHABAD
BENARES
GWALIOR
CENTRAL INDIA
CENTRAL PROVINCES
NAGPUR
BERAR
BIHAR
PATNA
GAYA
BENGAL
CALCUTTA
BHUTAN
ASSAM
SHILLONG
EASTERN STATES
ORISSA
CUTTACK
BOMBAY
POONA
DECCAN STATES
GOA
HYDERABAD
BELLARY
MYSORE
MADRAS
PONDICHERRY
CALICUT
COCHIN
TRAVANCORE
CEYLON
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
BURMA
MANDALAY
RANGOON
YUN NAN
FRENCH INDO-CHINA
THAILAND
GULF OF SIAM

meeting was held at Bombay and the Indian National Congress was formally brought into being, with the wise and firm W. C. Bonnerjee as the first President.

Objects of Congress.

As Hume explained, the Congress organisation was only one outcome of the labours of a body of cultured men, mostly Indians, who bound themselves together to labour silently for the good of India. The fundamental objects of this national movement were three-fold and were expressed in the following terms :

First, the fusion into one national whole of all the different elements which constitute the population of India.

Second, the gradual regeneration along all lines, spiritual, moral, social and political, of the nation thus evolved.

Third, the consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious.

Thus was set forth in simple language the great scheme for restoring the ancient grandeur of India in happy partnership with the British people. It was a Herculean task, but Hume brought to it the necessary elements of genius—the power to formulate a lofty ideal, and with infinite patience and industry to work out the practical details and give them shape. In a word, he possessed the personality needed for success in a heroic enterprise.

The Congress acquiesced in British rule in India while yet protesting against certain of its policies. This was so until 1889 when its original objectives were replaced by the creed of promoting, by constitutional means, the interests and well-being of the people of the British Indian Empire. These constitutional means, until 1905, were limited to the submission of petitions and memoranda and the passing of resolutions at public meetings requesting Government to provide a larger Indian element in the Civil Service and the Army, to enlarge public civil rights, to provide technical education, to abolish duties on Indian textiles, and miscellaneous things of that kind.

The early years of the 20th century were marked by rapid changes in the economic conditions of the country. Education was also spreading and liberal ideas were growing. Ideas of nationalism began to be nurtured. Congress workers also had by 1905 changed their tone and demands, and became more insistent. The following year saw the remarkable victory of Japan over the vast Russian Empire and this gave a great fillip to nationalist ideas in all the countries of the East. This led the Congress to declare, in 1907, that their objective was the attainment of a form of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire. Congress leaders continued to criticise the Government's financial policy, their sources of revenue and military expenditure in more aggressive, realistic and well-informed terms. The demand for compulsory primary education began to be advocated with greater force. With the Swadeshi movement on, the form of Congress activities underwent a change and acquired a national significance. There was ferment in the political life of the country resulting in the separation from the Congress of a large section of radicals who maintained their independent existence for some eight years. Thereafter, the Home Rule agitation, coupled with the promise of the British Government, during the First World War, of self-determination for the Indian people, served to attract the politics of the country to the Congress platform.

Mahatma Gandhi on the scene.

Far-reaching changes were produced by the First World War and certain actions of the British Government, notably the Amritsar Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in 1919, stirred Indian feelings. Congress leaders began to see the disparity between British professions

and the opposing actions of the Government of India. The nature of the freedom struggle was completely changed to a new creed. This was the creed of *swaraj* or self-rule, within the empire, if possible, without it, if necessary. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi the Congress launched in 1920 its non-violent non-co-operation movement. This struggle, which had mass appeal, particularly the rural population, continued for some two years, when in 1922 Mahatma Gandhi was arrested, tried and imprisoned.

At the annual session of the Congress held at Lahore in 1929, the Congress, under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, elaborated its creed of *swaraj*. The people voted for *purna swaraj*—complete independence. This *purna swaraj* meant the severance of British connection. A resolution of the Congress fixed January 26 to be observed as Independence Day every year.

Then followed the first Civil Disobedience Movement of Mahatma Gandhi in 1930, the starting of the movement being in the form of the historic Dandi March, headed by Mahatma Gandhi, to break the salt laws. The second Civil Disobedience Movement was again launched by him in 1934. During these movements masses of people courted imprisonment for breaking the laws relating to Government's salt monopoly, forests, land-tax, sedition, and the like.

Earlier, there had been agitation against the Simon Commission appointed by the British Cabinet in 1928 to review the working of the Government of India and to make recommendations for further reforms. The Commission was boycotted by the Congress but subsequently it participated in the Round Table Conferences in London (1930—32). As a result of prolonged discussions, far-reaching reforms were ushered in the form of the Government of India Act, 1935, providing for the scheme of a federal constitution for India with the Indian Princes as an integral part of the scheme and with a large measure of autonomy in the Provinces. The elections preceding the inauguration of this Act returned Congressmen to the Provincial Legislatures in overwhelming numbers. The Congress then decided to give a trial to the scheme of Provincial Autonomy, and Congress Ministries were formed in almost all the Provinces. In their short term of office until 1939, these Ministries took great strides for agrarian reforms, civil liberties, prohibition, education and the improvement of the conditions of industrial labour.

The resignation of Congress Ministries in 1939 was the outcome of the British Cabinet declaring India, without her consent, to be a country at war with Germany in the Second World War. Provincial Autonomy and Provincial Legislatures were then suspended, giving place to direct rule by the bureaucracy.

Quit India.

Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi again, the Congress passed the famous QUIT INDIA resolution at its Annual Session at Bombay on August 9, 1942. The following morning all top-leaders of the Congress were arrested and many remained in jail until the end of the War in 1945.

The Labour Government had now replaced the Conservatives in Britain and the new Government sent the Cabinet Mission led by Secretary of State Lord Pethick Lawrence for discussions about the country's future constitution with India's leaders. The talks began on April 1, 1946, and the Congress on behalf of the Indian people agreed to work at the Centre in the Interim Government which was formed in September 1946. Thereafter, negotiations with the British Government were pursued leading to the historic announcement of June 3, 1947, in which the British Cabinet declared their final plan for the establishment of the Independent Dominions of India and Pakistan, a plan which was accepted both by the Congress and the Muslim League.

Independence

According to the original announcement the transfer of power to the two Dominions was to be made by the end of June 1948. To give effect to the scheme of transfer, the British Cabinet selected a soldier of great calibre, wisdom and drive in the person of Lord Louis Mountbatten. The noble Lord pushed through the scheme in record time so that with the passing by Parliament of the Government of India Act, 1947, the transfer of power was effected on the mid-night of August 14-15, 1947. Thus August 15, 1947, saw the fulfilment of Mahatma Gandhi's objective of a free country and an independent nation.

With the withdrawal of the British as the paramount power, Indian States posed a serious problem. But through the efforts of the distinguished patriot and statesman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the problem was solved by the voluntary surrender of their ruling powers by the Indian Princes. Thus what was so long a separate entity in India's life was integrated in the general framework of a mighty country.

In record time, the Indian people gave themselves a republican constitution so that on January 26, 1950, the Union of India became a Sovereign Democratic Republic, securing to all its citizens liberty in the fullest meaning of that expression.

Sub-joined to this chapter is an annexure showing the Chronology of the Congress.

ANNEXURE

CHRONOLOGY OF THE CONGRESS

1885	The Indian National Congress founded.
1905	Partition of Bengal.
1906	Dadabhai Naoroji in his presidential address at Calcutta proclaimed *Swaraj* as the goal of the Congress.
1907	Agitation against partition of Bengal—Boycott of British goods—Split in the ranks of Congress at Surat.
1909	The Indian Councils Act—The Minto-Morley Reforms.
1916	Lucknow Pact—Home Rule League formed.
1917	Declaration of the Secretary of State promising responsible government to India.
1919	Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
1920	Inauguration of Non-cooperation Movement by Mahatma Gandhi—Death of Lokmanya Tilak.
1922	Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, trial and imprisonment.
1924	Swarajist Party enters Legislatures.
1927	Statutory Commission set up under Sir John Simon—Boycott by most sections of Indian opinion.
1928	The Bardoli no-tax campaign under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
1929	Lahore Congress passes Independence resolution under the presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—26th of January fixed as Independence Day to be celebrated every year.

1930 ..	.. Civil Disobedience Movement by Congress—Gandhi's historic Dandi March—Incarceration in Yervada Jail—First Round Table Conference.
1931 ..	.. Gandhi-Irwin Pact signed—Second Round Table Conference.
1932 ..	.. Communal Award—Gandhiji's fast, resulting in Poona Pact.
1935 ..	.. Government of India Act providing for Provincial Autonomy and Federal Centre passed. Orissa and Sind constituted separate provinces.
1937 ..	.. Introduction of Provincial Autonomy—Electoral victories of the Congress—Popular Ministries in provinces formed.
1939 ..	.. Second World War—Congress protest against India being declared a belligerent without her consent—Resignation of Congress Ministries.
1940 ..	.. Muslim League's Pakistan resolution.
1941 ..	.. Viceroy's Executive Council expanded.
1942 ..	.. Rejection of Cripps' proposals both by the Congress and the League—"Quit India" resolution passed by the Congress—Arrest of Congress leaders—Wide-spread disturbances in India.
1944 ..	.. Gandhi-Jinnah talks in Bombay.
1945 ..	.. Congress leaders released—Breakdown of Simla Conference on Wavell Plan.
1946 (15th March)	.. Premier Clement Attlee's statement in the House of Commons stating that no minority would be allowed to veto the progress of the majority.
1946 (1st April)	.. Cabinet Delegation's talks with Indian leaders started.
1946 (2nd September)	.. Interim Government formed.
1946 (16th October)	.. Muslim League members join the Interim Government.
1946 (9th December)	.. Inaugural Session of Constituent Assembly.
1947 (20th February)	.. British Government's announcement fixing June 1948 as deadline for complete transfer of power.
1947 (24th March)	.. Lord Mountbatten of Burma took charge as Viceroy.
1947 (3rd June)	.. Announcement of the final plan of the British Government to form two independent Dominions—India and Pakistan.
1947 (15th August)	.. British authority voluntarily withdrawn.
1950 (26th January)	. Constitution of India inaugurated—India becomes a Sovereign Democratic Republic with Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the first President and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister.

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CHAPTER FIFTY

OUR FREEDOM—WHAT IT MEANS

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high ;
Where knowledge is free ;
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow
domestic walls ;
Where words come out from the depth of truth ;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection ;
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary
desert sand of dead habit ;
Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-widening thought
and action :
Into that HEAVEN OF FREEDOM, *my* FATHER, *let my country awake.*

—RABINDRA NATH TAGORE.

Sometime ago, Prime Minister Nehru felt hurt to know that some of the best Indian scientists preferred to remain abroad and even to settle down in foreign countries because those countries provided them better facilities for work. He reminded them that individuals could not set aside "certain bonds, responsibilities and obligations" which they owed to their own country. It may be true, the Prime Minister added, that India could not provide them the inducements which foreign countries could afford, yet that was no reason for them to stay abroad when their own country needed their services.

It is perhaps not always realized that the State, or the country, with all its deficiencies, has claims upon its citizens—claims which are not related to civil or political rights which the State guarantees to them. We are apt to forget the truth of the saying that it is only in the world of duties that rights have any meaning.

One cannot detach himself from the idea of his country in any situation or circumstance. We should take pride in the State not only in all its glories, but also in all its shortcomings. This idea has been enshrined in a metaphor relating to a tree and its flowers in the following beautiful verse of Meer Anees :

ऐ हो विटप हम सुमन तुम्हारे हैं,
राखिहो हमें तो शोभा रावरी बढ़ावेंगे ।
तजिहो हमें तहूं विलग न मानें कछु,
जहां जहां जावें हम तेरो यश गावेंगे ॥
सुरन चढ़ेंगे नर सिरन चढ़ेंगे,
सुकवि अनीस हाट हाटन बिकावेंगे ।
देश में रहेंगे परदेश में रहेंगे,
काहू भेष में रहेंगे तऊ रावरे कहावेंगे ॥

We have paid the price for our freedom, price in the form of the self-sacrifice of thousands of men and women. It is well, therefore, to remind ourselves that our freedom means that we possess, to quote the famous words of Abraham Lincoln a "government of the people, by the people, for the people" ; that

we have the power to choose our own government, i.e. the persons who should manage our affairs for us ; that we can change the government through the incalculable power of the vote, the ballot being more powerful than the bullet ; that we are a sovereign nation not depending on the will of any other country and have given to ourselves a democratic constitution in which justice, liberty, equality and fraternity are secured to all and in which the fundamental rights of the citizens have been guaranteed.

In the search for economic and social remedies the people have to be careful not to undermine the supremacy of their parliamentary institutions. "The road to economic security, by way of political dictatorship, is the most costly thoroughfare that the folly of man has ever devised" (William Munro in *Governments of Europe*). This is how it happens—people will not prefer to starve in order to preserve the ministerial line, the dignity of the State or the freedom of speech ; in their misery they will turn to some true or false prophet who promises to solve their problems ; then reaching the promised land of work and security they discover to their dismay that they have pawned their liberties as the price of the change.

Adolph Hitler understood this psychology and turned it to his advantage. He found that every individual, whether rich or poor, has in his inner being a feeling of unfulfilment ; that life is full of disappointments which people cannot master ; that slumbering somewhere is the readiness to risk some final sacrifice, some adventure in order to give a new shape to their lives. And the great dictator made it his business to canalize that urge for political purposes and succeeded in hypnotizing the German people.*

In their time, the Greeks were the most civilized people in the western world, and they were the only free people then. Because of that, overwhelming armies of Persians were defeated by small Greek forces, proving the truth of the axiom that one free man is superior to many who are subject to the will of a tyrant.

And it was the free Greeks who created the first democracy in the world. They were thinking people, they taught their sons to think, to be independent men. Theirs was a free state which had come into being through thought. They knew that *their country was free because they were free, not that they were free because their country was free.* They also knew that they were free because they willingly obeyed the law, not only the written law, but still more the unwritten law, for there are many qualities which cannot be encompassed within a written code, but which depended on a man's free choice.

The ideals of the Greeks made them a flourishing people for 2,500 years. But they were ruined by a slackness that gradually overcame them. They began to think of security and a comfortable life more than of freedom ; they wanted the State to give to them, not that they give to the State ; and finally the freedom that they wanted most was freedom from responsibility. And in the process they lost not only their freedom but also their security and comfort. Greek history has thus a valuable lesson for us. (*Reader's Digest*).

Like all free countries we have the privileges incidental to liberty and many rights and advantages too. At the same time, we have responsibilities and liabilities too which are inherent in our freedom and are necessary for its preservation. We may thus remind ourselves that we owe a duty to the State which has claims upon our love and reverence. Here we may distinguish between the State and the Government which happens to run the State for the time being. This is symbolised in the famous Shakespearian

*Putzi Hanfstaengl in *Hitler—The Missing Years.*

line : "I love not Caesar less, but I love Rome more."

All citizens of the country owe unequivocal allegiance to the State even though some may be opposed to the Government in power. This means that if one is dissatisfied by any action of the ruling party, his allegiance to the *State* would still remain unaffected. People are, however, apt to forget this sometimes, for instance on occasions, when in their agitation against the Government, they begin to injure the *State* by destroying State property—the property of the Nation. They do so forgetting that the country is their own, that the country's property is their own as much as the Himalayas and the Taj.

Our freedom also requires us to be a disciplined people so that we may be able to hold our own amongst the nations of the world. Discipline is a broad-based expression and in that sense applies to a methodically planned and calculated way of life—it covers every action of the individual and his behaviour. Thus, it is not confined to the class-room or to military drill ; it covers also the way in which we conduct ourselves and perform our duties. A public servant habitually going late to office is as much guilty of indiscipline as a student creating nuisance in the class-room. "If there is one thing India as a country needs to-day, it is discipline. It has intellect, has ideals, has the great heritage of the past and a great dream of the future. But the co-operating element that links the greatness of the past and the hope of the future lies in that one subtle word *discipline* which all must interpret rightly and follow loyally"—Sarojini Naidu.

Our freedom also means that we have to give up recourse to *alibi* and accept responsibility where it is due. The citizens of a free nation cannot afford to disclaim it at pleasure. When something goes wrong, one is tempted to put the responsibility on some other by taking a plea in the nature of an *alibi*. The defence may sometimes be valid, but often it points to an escapist mentality. For any evils present in the country, each one of its citizens is equally responsible in the moral sense. If a public servant takes illegal gratification, we blame the Government. If there is indiscipline, we blame the students. But why should we forget that amongst the public servants we have our own kith and kin ; amongst students we have our own sons and daughters. And do we not owe a duty to reform them ? Do we not need to search our own heart to remove the corruption and indiscipline from ourselves ?

Our liberty also requires us to respect the liberty and the rights of others. One would be abusing his liberty if he tries to gain an undeserved advantage over another in his career, trade or profession or in his daily life and conduct.

As free citizens, it is everybody's duty to preserve the Constitution and the democratic form of government which it enshrines—this is the very basis of our liberty. It is also to be remembered that democracy is not merely a form of government ; it is a way of life, a way of thinking; a way of doing things.

And finally it is well to remember the words of wisdom of the great political philosopher, John Stuart Mill : "A people may prefer a free government ; but if from indolence, or carelessness, or cowardice, or want of public spirit, they are unequal to the exertions necessary for preserving it, if they will not fight for it when directly attacked ; if they can be deluded by the artifices used to cheat them out of it ; if by momentary discouragement or temporary panic or in a fit of enthusiasm for an individual they can be induced to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions—in all these cases they are unfit for liberty".

राजश्री जहं दहलुई भुक्ति करति जहं भक्ति,
जहं बहु धर्मोन्नति, तम्य स्वतंत्रता शक्ति।

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

LEST WE FORGET—THE LESSON OF NANA SAHEB AND THE LESSON OF HISTORY

शहीदों की चिताओं पर लगेंगे हर बरस मेले,
वतन पर जो निसारों का यही बाकी निशां होगा।

"All soldiers and others unconnected with the acts of Lord Dalhousie, who will lay down their arms and give themselves up, shall be spared and sent to Allahabad"—this is what Nana Saheb wrote to General Wheeler on the morning of June 26, 1857. General Wheeler was at that time besieged in the entrenchment along with his soldiers and European women and children. The plight of the besieged was more miserable than can be described—"the ladies and others had been maddened by suffering"*. The unfortunate garrison surrendered on terms that were agreed upon, but here we are concerned neither with the condition of the besieged nor with their surrender. We are concerned with what Nana Saheb and the other leaders of the revolt were fighting for.

Nana Saheb had been brought up in luxurious surroundings. He was heir to the *ex*-Peshwa Baji Rao, though on the latter's death in 1851, the Government did not continue to Nana Saheb any portion of Baji Rao's pension, nor paid any stiperd for the maintenance of the two widows of the late Peshwa. Nevertheless, Baji Rao had left substantial assets which came in the hands of Nana Saheb as his adopted son. This enabled him to live in comfort in his father's mansion at Bithoor and to keep up some show of princely state for he was allowed to retain a force of 500 men and three guns.

Nana Saheb made great efforts to secure the continuance to him of Baji Rao's pension, in substantial part, if not in whole, but Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, rejected the claim. Nana Saheb had his claim then advocated in England through Azimullah Khan, but again without success. He then reconciled himself to his ill-luck, and maintained cordial relations with European officers and civilians of Kanpur, inviting them occasionally to entertainments at Bithoor.

So far this was all in the fitness of things—indeed, it must be said to the credit of Nana Saheb that he harboured no malice against the British officials and the English gentry of Kanpur, although he considered himself aggrieved by Lord Dalhousie's order which was endorsed by the Company's Directors in London.

When the revolt broke out Nana Saheb sided with the rebels. The precise circumstances in which he did so are not material here. There is no doubt that he joined the cause of the rebels primarily from motives of patriotism—to see his country freed from a foreign Government. He staked a large fortune and a comfortable life in that struggle. He did so in a manner so unreserved and with such a relentless spirit that he expected no quarter from the British Government in the event of their success. And so it was that when he

*Sherer's *Account*.

lost the final battle of Kanpur he had to flee with his family and faithful adherents. He was then in the prime of youth and, according to common belief, passed the rest of his long life as a fugitive in distress. So, in common with all the patriots of the day, he paid a heavy price for his country. A grateful nation has erected a memorial to him at Bithoor at the place where Maharaja Baji Rao's mansion had stood in majestic form in the midst of a flourishing people.

This is all as it should have been. But may not one ask : is patriotism enough ? This sounds strange for if patriotism and self-sacrifice are not enough then what is ? For an answer we may ask yet another question : What precisely has the patriot been fighting for ? Here the difference must be recognized between fighting, from motives of patriotism, of course, against a Lord Dalhousie or a General Havelock, and between fighting for the *cause* of the country against *the forces* opposing that cause *regardless of the personality* of those behind that opposition and without any ill-will against them. The latter kind of fight is the one which Mahatma Gandhi started against the British Government in 1921 and which ultimately brought us Independence in 1947. That fight differed from all earlier struggles against the English. The Father of the Nation did not fight a Lord Irwin or a Sir Winston Churchill, but fought against the system by which India was being ruled by a foreign people. And in that fight he had not the slightest malice against any Englishman whether a Viceroy or a Provincial Governor. And when Sir Winston Churchill described him as THE NAKED FAQIR Mahatma Gandhi was simply amused although many of our countrymen got annoyed at that description.

And while on this subject, it would be interesting to recall an incident in the life of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Khalifa. A wicked person, by name Omar Ibn-i-Abdood, had used unbecoming language for the Prophet in the presence of Hazrat Ali who thereupon took him to task. In the course of the physical struggle* which ensued Hazrat Ali brought him down and sat on his chest with a dagger which he was about to thrust in his body. Before, however, he could do so, the offender spat on the face of Hazrat Ali, whereupon the latter released him from his grip, leaving him to make good his escape. Ibn-i-Abdood was wonder-struck by this behaviour and asked Hazrat Ali why, instead of slaying him the very moment he had spat on him, he left him alone. The wise Khalifa explained that when he first attacked him his sole purpose was to fight for a *cause* by which he thought God would be pleased. He had no personal ill-will against Ibn-i-Abdood. But when he spat upon him his anger was roused and a feeling of revenge entered his heart. It then occurred to him that to kill the man at that moment would be doing an act, not for a cause or to please God, but only to satisfy his own revengeful spirit. The worthy Hazrat Ali added that killing him on a personal score would have undone the pious deed he was about to perform, so thinking he had let him off.

We have a similar elevating instance in the battle between Lord Krishna and his disciple Arjun. The Lord was Arjun's *guru* and in addition both had profound love for each other. Yet they fought a furious battle between them for a *cause*. Before beginning the combat, Arjun sent arrows at the Teacher's feet in salutation, and the Lord replied by blessing his pupil.

A further elevating example of fighting without ill-will is to be found in the Mahabharat. Before the fighting of the great battle actually begins between the armies of the Kauravas and the Pandavas arrayed

*Such a sort of struggle is technically called the fight of the *Khandak*.

in the field, Yudhishthir, with his brothers, goes to Pitamah Bheeshma who is on the side of Duryodhan. After due obeisance Yudhishthir asks for the kind blessings of Bheeshma which are given with deep sincerity—a noble example indeed of the lofty height to which human nature can rise.

These examples have been cited to illustrate a point and are not intended to belittle the sacrifice made by Nana Saheb or to impugn his intentions. He was unsuccessful, but his sacrifice and suffering did not go in vain. The failure of 1857 laid the foundations of the success of 1947. Indeed, the leaders of 1857 died to be reborn as the leaders who secured Independence.

We must consider Nana Saheb in the context of the times in which he lived. In that context he was justified in joining his personal grievance (against the East India Company) with the cause for the liberation of the country. Such was the case with almost all who took part in the revolt. The sepoys had the grievance of greased cartridges ; Indian officers had personal grievances against their British masters : the Rani of Jhansi had been deprived of her principality ; the young wife of the Chief of Nargund (South India) had been refused the right of adoption whereupon she "had resolved upon giving her whole life for the destruction of the Feringhis" ; the dispossessed landlords were fighting for their lands ; Begum Hazrat Mahal was wanting to restore her young son to the throne of Avadh, and Kunwar Singh too had his grievances against the English.

Thus, though every one had some personal account to settle with the British, they all were, at the same time, inspired also by the nobler motive of expelling the foreigner. They were patriotic and courageous and have a high place in our esteem, but we ought not to hesitate in acknowledging that the weakness of the struggle lay in personal considerations having been mixed up with the national cause. The British Government did not omit to take advantage of this weakness for in Queen Victoria's proclamation promises were made that the religious beliefs of the people would never be interfered with, that Indians would be freely admitted to the services, that an issueless ruling prince could adopt an heir to the gaddi, that those who had taken up arms would be pardoned, that their property shall not be confiscated, and so on. So when the personal grievances were promised to be redressed the struggle lost its vitality—it was forgotten that good foreign rule is no substitute for self-government. With a few praiseworthy exceptions the fighters lost their morale and surrendered.

One thing which history reminds ourselves is our tendency of isolationism in all spheres of life—social, economic and political. This, amongst other subsidiary reasons, has been the main cause of our ills in the past and it is this tendency which must be scrupulously guarded against if Indian history is not to repeat itself.

Nana Saheb took up arms against the British. He succeeded in reducing them at Kanpur. He was then proclaimed Peshwa and although he announced his allegiance to the Emperor at Delhi in whose name he acted he allowed himself to believe that with the conquest of Kanpur the whole of India had changed hands. He forgot that conquest of Kanpur was but an isolated event and did not mean the end of British power in the whole of India. He carried on his administration at Kanpur as if the English had ceased to exist anywhere in the country. In saying this it is not intended to belittle the many difficulties which he and the leaders of the revolt at other places had to face, but the fact remains that they all acted in isolation. The British not only took advantage of this, but also created isolation where it did not exist. It then became easy for them to reduce the leader of each place separately—a purpose they were easily able to achieve with comparatively smaller troops and weapons.

Going further back in history we find that Prithvi Raj was left alone to fight the invader on more than one occasion. Other rulers of India kept themselves aloof, foolishly thinking that it was a personal affair of the Delhi monarch to defend his kingdom. Again, in the third battle of Panipat the Marathas alone were left to meet the powerful invading army of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Other powers in India, the Rajputs for instance, remained aloof ; the Jats, who had first joined the Marathas, cleared away before the fighting began. So the Marathas were completely routed and ruined. The subsequent expansion of British power in India was largely due to this disaster.

In a letter to the Home authorities in England Governor Verelst described this spirit of exclusiveness as a powerful reason for the security of the Company's position. He held that the discordance of the principles, views and interests of the neighbouring Indian powers always defeated any project by a single ruler against the British though such a project could easily have been accomplished by an association of several rulers. He then added that "the majority of the present princes of Hindustan become jealous and suspicious of each other, and ever ready to throw in their weight against anyone whom they see rising too high above the common level. For this reason, they at first looked on our successes with an evil eye ; still our generosity to Shuja-ud-daula, our attention to our treaties and public faith and above all our moderation in not pushing our victories, begot a confidence in us they had not in their countrymen, and made them rather ambitious of our friendship than jealous of our power."—Henry Verelst, Governor of Bengal, after Clive, 1767.

Apart from isolation in the political field this tendency manifested itself in other spheres too. In the field of science and technology we contented ourselves by the gifts of our forefathers without taking to research and development. In economics and sociology also the tendency to aloofness had found its way, both in the community as well as in the individual who began to consider himself as an altogether separate entity.

In a message to the people on May 10, 1957, when the country was celebrating the centenary of 1857, Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, referred to the lessons which that great uprising has for us. In his view the principal cause of the failure of 1857 was the absence of a common ideal, so that its one lesson is to find out a unifying ideal which shall integrate the peoples of India into a symbolic whole and prevent the loosening of the bonds that should hold the national structure together. Here are some profitable extracts from that message :

"Be the judgment of the scholars what it may, the public cherishes the memories of the leaders of 1857 with respect and affection. Some of them, like Rani Lakshmi Bai and Kunwar Singh, have become almost legendary figures. Their lives inspired thousands of those patriots who took part in our long struggle for independence. . . . But the inspiration is not the only thing that those events have to give us. There are important lessons which we may ignore only at our peril. The causes which led to the failure of that great adventure have not been wiped out. Ninety years of foreign rule welded the different parts of the country much more closely together, politically, economically and emotionally than it had been in 1857, and powerful centrifugal forces are at work even to-day. Anything affecting one part of the country sends a wave of feeling and sympathetic reactions pulsating all down the country much more powerful than any impulse could have done in those days. But fissiparous tendencies have raised their head, all the same . . . . Eighteen hundred and fifty-seven ended in failure not only because it carried no strong all-India appeal, but because there was no strong

connecting link amongst the actively participating units. . . . They had no idea of what the ultimate shape of things would be."

Dr. Sampurnanand then observes that one of the lessons of 1857 is to overcome the tendencies which stand in the way of a united India *with a mission of its own*. *The country* "can hold its components together only through the mechanism of an ideal and a philosophy which shall appeal not only to the intellect but to the emotions. . . Indian culture is the joint product of the thoughts, the creative genius and the aspirations of a thousand men drawn from all over the country. Cannot we, when celebrating the events of 1857, dedicate ourselves once more to all that India stands for ? Let us not be ashamed to proclaim that India has a mission, that her independence means that or nothing at all. It is for our thinkers to tell us what it is that India symbolises, but it is for the leaders of public opinion to encourage the thinkers to speak."

And to conclude my humble work I can find no better words than :

जननी जन्म भूमिश्च
स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।

The mother and the motherland are greater than Heaven itself.

PART FOUR

APPENDICES

(From A to G)

Incite thy subjects to cultivate science; and him that is eminent in science be careful to distinguish with unusual patronage and favour—by this practice thou wilt be promoting thine own popularity and the kingdom's good together. To these two qualities is to be attributed the extraordinary duration of the Empire of Greece, for the kings constantly impressed upon their subjects the necessity of acquiring knowledge so much so that girls used to acquaint themselves at their father's house with the principles of morality, religion, medicine and astronomy.

—Aristotle's advice to Alexander.

APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMPANY'S ARMIES IN 1857

At the time of the rebellion the armies of the East India Company consisted of three separate units, namely :

The Bengal Army
The Madras Army
The Bombay Army

In other words, there was a separate army for each Presidency, and each army was a distinct entity. The Company's possessions extended far and wide and so the troops of each Presidency Army operated within the territorial jurisdiction of that Presidency. If they had to go to fight in an area outside the Presidency they were compensated for their field service by the payment of *batta* or premium. This, however, used to be withdrawn on the return of the unit to its home station.

The arsenals were in the hands of Indians. In Delhi alone, about 300 guns and 20,000 rifles fell into the hands of the nationalist forces on the outbreak at that station.

The lines of communication from Calcutta to Peshawar were being guarded by detachments of the Bengal Army alone. In the rainy season the roads turned into strips of bog making movement of artillery-men difficult. Rivers provided another means of communication, but the passage was treacherous on account of crossing currents and changing sand-banks.

While the Madras and Bombay Armies were enlisting all classes, including Christians and scheduled castes, the Bengal Army was a virtual monopoly of high caste Brahmans and of Rajputs belonging mostly to the eastern districts of what is now the State of Uttar Pradesh. For that reason the troops of this army were nick-named *Purbias* (Easterners).

The figures about the strength of the Company's armies in 1857 and some basic particulars about them may be seen in chapter 13 dealing with 'State of India in 1857'.

The British officers in the Bengal Army were senile men. They were allowed to serve till the age of 70 ; Sir Hugh Wheeler, the Commander of the unit at Kanpur, was well over 70. They had created monopolies, but were incapable of enforcing discipline. Indian officers served up to the age of 50. The Army Reforms of 1824 had improved things to some extent, but there was discrimination between the British officers of the Royal troops (that is troops belonging to the British Sovereign) and the officers of the Company's armies. This caused resentment amongst the Company's officers. The proportion of British officers in each Indian Regiment (then called Native Regiments) was also very high.

The chart below shows the average composition of an Indian ('Native') Regiment some time before 1857 :

REGIMENT

Commanded by a Colonel.

2 Grenadier Companies.	Under a total of 22 *European* officers.	8 Battalion or Infantry Companies.

Each of these consisted of :

1 Subedar
1 Jamadar
5 Havildars
1 Drummer
1 Piper
1 Packally
65 Sepoys

75 All Indians.

The total strength of the Regiment thus worked out to :

Europeans	*Indians*			
Officers :				
1 Colonel	2 Grenadier Companies :		8 Battalion Companies :	
1 Captain (Commandant)	2 × 75	.. 150	8 × 75	.. 600
4 Lieutenants	Followers	.. 13	Followers	.. 48
6 Ensigns				
10 Sergeants		163		648
22		811		
	833			

The above strength was later increased and at the beginning of the "Mutiny" the personnel of a Regiment was almost thrice the previous number. It consisted of two Battalions, each having eight Companies (Grenadier and Infantry) and the entire Regiment was, as before, commanded by a Colonel. The chart below shows the normal composition of a Regiment in 1857 :

REGIMENT

Commanded by a Colonel

Headquarters		Battalion (8 Coys.)		Battalion (8 Coys.)
		British personnel		
Colonel	.. 1	Lt. Colonel ..	1	Same as in previous column.
Captain	.. 1	Major ..	1	
Lieutenant	.. 1	Adjutant ..	1	
Paymaster	.. 1	Captains ..	3	
Surgeon	.. 1	Lieutenants .	11	
		Ensigns* .	5	
		Assist Surgeon	1	
		Sergeant-Major	1	
		Quarter-Master Sergeant .	1	
		Drum-Major .	1	
		Pipe-Major ..	1	
		Drummers .	10	
		Pipers .	10	
Total	5		47	47

	Indian personnel			
	Subedars ..	10	Same as in previous column.	
	Jamadars ..	10		
	Indian Adjutant	1		
	Indian Doctor	1		
	Havildars ..	50		
	Drill Havildar	1		
	Naiks	50		
	Drill Naik ..	1		
	Private sepoys	900		
	Recruit boys	80		
	Packallies ..	10		
	Total ..	1,114	Total	1,114
Total, British and Indian ..		1,161		1,161
Grand Total : 5+1,161+1,161 ..		2,327		
OR				
British.. 99, Indians.. 2,228 ..		2,327		

ARMS AND EQUIPMENT OF A BATTALION (INFANTRY) JUST BEFORE THE "MUTINY".

Arms:

Flint-locked muskets, called "Brown Bess". These were percussion smoothbored muskets.

Weight ..	11 lb. 4 oz. with bayonet.
Length ..	3 ft. 3 inches.
Diameter of bore	.753" smooth bore.
Charge of gun-powder.	6 drams with 3 flints to every 60 rounds.
Gun-powder ..	Ground gun-powder.
Capacity ..	Smashed bores and stopped the enemy.
Range ..	150 yards.
Length of bayonet	17 inches.
Cartridges for muskets.	Ball cartridges were introduced in 1851. These were standard cartridges with percussion caps. The cartridges had to be greased with a composition consisting of 8 parts of gingili oil and 7 parts of bees-wax. These cartridges were housed in a pouch of 10 capacity.

*An ensign was the lowest commissioned rank for British officers in the army of those days.

Leather accoutrements.	Pouches. Belts. Frogs for bayonet scabbards. Scabbards for bayonets. Hatchets carried by sepoys.
Officers (British), Native commandants and Company officers	Carried a light automatic fusile operated by flint to act as a medium of giving order signals. This fusile was later superseded by swords.
Sergeants ..	Carried a sword and a battan.

Signalling equipment :

Flags ..	16 signalling flags of various colours and sizes.
Heliographs ..	2
Telescopes ..	2
Hand signalling lamps ..	2
Beghie's B. B. pattern lamps	2
Signalling cypher wheels ..	2
Dummy keys ..	2

Entrenching tools :

Axes ..	2¾ lb.—90
Crow-bars ..	5 ft. 6"—2 4 ft. 6"—2
Hammers, sledge	10 lb.—2
Hooks, bill-handled	40
Shovels ..	90

The executive command and the interior economy of the unit was the responsibility of the Indian officers (*subedars*, etc.) while British commanding officers and their staff were responsible for training and tactical handling. Sir George Trevelyan describes the Indian portion of the composition of a regiment of the Bengal Army in these words : "In every regiment there was a Soubahdar-major, or native colonel ; and in every company a Soubahdar, who answered to a European captain, and a Jemmadar, who answered to a European subaltern. These were the commissioned officers who wore swords and sashes, sat on a court-martial, and were saluted by the rank and file....... There was no approach to friendship or even to familiar intercourse between them and their Saxon brethren in arms, who considered that, if they offered their Soubahdar a chair during an interview on regimental business, quite enough had been done to mark the difference between a commissioned and a non-commissioned sepoy. The sergeant and the corporal were represented by the havildar and the naick ; titles which make the list of killed and wounded in Indian battles so bewildering to an English reader. Thus the Brahmin battalion had a complete outfit of Brahmin officers, and this it was what rendered the rebellious army so terribly efficient for evil. When every Englishman in a corps had been murdered or scared away, the organization none-the-less remained in tact. The regiment was still a military machine finished in every part, compact, flexible, and capable as ever of a great and sustained exertion of strength and courage. This imperfect, but, it is to be feared, tedious sketch of the composition of our native force, as it existed before the mutiny, may well be closed with the oracular words of Sir Charles Napier, the Cassandra of the old Bengal army : 'Your young, independent, wild cadet, will some day find the Indian army taken out of his hands by the Soubahdars. They are steady, respectful, thoughtful, stern-looking men ; very zealous and military ; the sole instructors of all our soldiers'."*

The Indian troops wore, like their British counterparts, red uniforms (with black trousers), hence the nick-name *Lal Paltan* for the Company's Army.

The Indian sepoys lived in Sepoy Lines which generally consisted of long rows of huts built of mud in a frame-work of bamboos and

**Cawnpore*, pages 39-40.

thatched with straw. 'Barracks' was another name given to these structures. Every soldier had his own separate room where he kept the women of his household. The Indian officers of each company had their habitations at the two ends of each row. These consisted of two or three cabins round a small courtyard, fenced with a mud wall a few feet high.

Each regiment had a bazar for itself which supplied the wants and ministered to the pleasure of the battalion. Sutlers, corn-merchants, cloth merchants, sellers of silver ornaments and tobacconists were all there. Besides, prostitutes also plied their trade.

The European officers of the regiment were living in separate and spacious bungalows designed and decorated according to the rank of the occupant. Sir George Trevelyan has graphically described how the English subaltern wore out "the weary hours of the interminable Indian day; smoking, dozing, playing with his terrier; longing for the evening, or for a call from a brother-officer with whom he may discuss the Army List and partake of the ever-recurring refreshment of brandy and soda-water; lazily endeavouring to get some little insight into the languages of the hateful East by the help of a fat, fawning native tutor, and a stupid and indecent Oordoo work on mythology; pondering sadly on home landscapes and home recollections, as he gazes across the sharply-defined line of shadow, thrown by the roof of the verandah, into the outdoor heat and glare, with no pleasanter object of contemplation than the Patna-sheep belonging to the Station Mutton Club, and his own modest stud, consisting of a raw-boned Australian horse and an old Cabul pony picketed under a group of mango-trees near the gate of the compound".

Sir George goes on with his description: "The door into the Sahib's bedroom stands open, like every other door in British India; the multitude of servants and the necessity for coolness, forbidding the very idea of privacy. There stands a bedstead of wood, worm-eaten, unplaned, unpolished, enclosed on all sides with mosquito-curtains of white gauge, the edges carefully tucked in beneath the mattress, through which is dimly seen the recumbent form of the Sahib, clad in a silk shirt and linen drawers, the universal night dress of the East. The poor boy is doing his best to recover, during the cooler morning hours, the arrears of the sleepless night, which he has passed in a state of feverish irritation—panting, perspiring, tossing from side to side in desire of a momentary relief from the tortures of prickly heat, the curse of young blood; anon, sallying into the verandah to rouse the nodding punkah-puller, more happy than his wakeful master."

If the European officer happened to be a married one, he was assigned somewhat better quarters described thus by Sir George Trevelyan: "The home of a married pair may be somewhat more comfortable, and the residence of a man in high office considerably more magnificent; but the same characteristics prevail everywhere. A spirit of scrupulous order, and a snug domestic air, are not to be attained in an Indian household. At best a semi-barbarous profusion, an untidy splendour, and the absence of sordid cares, form the compensation for the loss of English comfort. Still, the lady must have her drawing-room, where she can display her wedding presents, and the purchases which she made at the Calcutta auctions during the cold season before last. The Commissioner must have his sanctum, where he can wallow in papers, and write letters of censure to his Collectors, letters of explanation to the Revenue Board, the letters of remonstrance to the local military authorities. The epicure cannot do without a roofed passage leading from his kitchen to his parlour; nor the sporting man without a loose box for the mare which he has entered for the Planters' Plate at Sonepore."

The average height for the sepoys of the

Bengal Army was 5′—8″ and dressed in their uniform of scarlet coat and black trousers presented an impressive appearance from a distance. They were, however, never able to make themselves comfortable in the uniform which they took off as soon as they were off duty.

The pay of the sepoy was Rs.7 a month with free uniform and accoutrements, the emoluments of cavalrymen being higher. But even with this salary the sepoy was held in considerable prestige in the society of his village. On account of his periodical expenditure on marriage feasts and other frequent customary celebrations he was generally always in debt.

On the march, the Indian troops were accompanied from station to station by the womenfolk of their families who travelled in small carts in the rear. With them were also the sepoys' male dependants and relations.

With every Indian battalion were attached two or three holy men who did duty as unofficial regimental chaplains for the sepoys. These men were highly regarded by the soldiery. When the battalion was on march, these men usually preceded it "in orange or salmon-coloured linen, if by good luck they deigned to wear any clothes at all ; their locks of long hair matted in strange fashion with grease and dirt ; their bodies sprinkled with ashes and daubed with coarse paint".*

Most of the sepoys of the Bengal Army were high caste Hindus. Gradually, these sepoys became indolent and discipline was lax, so there were frequent cases of insubordination. But for some unaccountable reasons European officers tolerated their men to extreme limits. Sir George Trevelyan has in his characteristic style thus described the laxity of Indian sepoys : "A party of native infantry in a night-march presented an appearance, absurd indeed, but to a thoughtful spectator not without serious significance. The men struggled along, carrying in their hands some beloved pipe, their most treasured possession, while their muskets were carelessly flung into the bullock-carts, in which not a few sepoys were snoring comfortably amidst the baggage. Even those on foot dozed as they walked, with that unaccountable capacity, common to all Hindoos, of going to sleep under the most adverse circumstances ; the collar of their great-coat turned up and kept in its place by a strip of calico ; their ears protected by folds of cloth passed underneath the chin and fastened over the top of the head, with a regimental forage-cap perched on the summit of this unsightly and unmartial headgear. In some corps men had so little respect for military rule and custom as to strip off their uniforms even when in guard. There were those who in great part attributed these irregularities to the abolition of corporal punishment effected by Lord William Bentinck, that wise and true friend of the native population of India. .. .. At the siege of Mooltan, where native troops from all parts of India were collected into one army, the vile temper of the Bengal sepoys and the extraordinary indulgence displayed towards them by their officers became painfully apparent. These insolent high-caste mercenaries positively refused to labour in the trenches, and endeavoured to induce or force the modest and trusty Bombay soldiers to follow their example. On one occasion a mob of these rascals, being unable to persuade a fatigue-party of Bombay men to strike work, proceeded to revile and at length to stone their worthier comrades. A captain in a rifle regiment marked the ring-leaders, but the Bengal officers flatly declined to take any steps in the matter, and the story was hushed up in order that their feelings might be spared."†

The regiments were filled with the people who belonged to the same caste and were

*Trevelyan, p. 24
†Trevelyan, pp. 15–17.

inter-related. In his outspoken style Sir George Trevelyan has described this state of affairs in these words: "Respect for the obligations of blood-relationship is so strong in the Hindoo mind that jobbery and nepotism flourished in oriental society to an extent which would seem inconceivably audacious to the colder imagination of a western public servant. The system of family patronage runs through all ranks and classes. The Indian judge loves to surround himself with clerks of the court and ushers from the ranks of his own kindred. The Indian superintendent of police prefers to have about him inspectors and sergeants, bound to his interest by nearer ties than those of official dependence. The head-bearer fills his master's house with young barbarians from his native village ; and, in like manner, the veteran sepoys took measures to keep the regiment supplied with recruits from the neighbourhood in which they themselves had been born and bred. No strapping young Tewarry, or Pandey, who had a mind to shoulder the Company's musket and touch the Company's rupees, had long to wait for a place in the section of which the sergeant was his uncle and the corporal his brother-in-law. On the other hand, a stranger was soon driven from the regiment by that untiring and organised social oppression in which military men nearer home have sometimes proved themselves adepts. And so it came to pass in the course of time that the company partook of the nature of a family, and the battalion of the nature of a clan. The consequence was that there existed a sympathy and free-masonry throughout the ranks of quite another tendency from that tone of regimental patriotism and martial brotherhood known in European armies by the title of *esprit de corps.* Such a state of things afforded peculiar facilities for conspiring. A disaffected body of sepoys possessed the power of a host and the discretion of a clique. The most extensive and perilous designs could be matured in perfect secrecy, and carried into effect by the weight of a vast and unanimous multitude".*

The sepoys were incredibly ignorant of the extent of British resources. They firmly believed that the population of the British Isles was one lakh only. They also held the conviction that all the available male population of England was already in India.

The sepoys, most of whom were high caste Brahmins, were very particular about their meals and the manner in which they cooked it. Sir George Trevelyan has in satirical language described this thus : "The mind of the sepoys reeked with religious prejudice. He had adopted his profession in accordance with the dictates of his superstition. He belonged to a sacred order, and his life was one long ceremony. He could not prepare his simple food without clearing for himself a separate plot of ground secure from the intrusion of others. Should a stranger step into this magic ring, the food which he had cooked was thrown untasted away. When some Bengal regiments were serving in China, it occasionally happened that an unlucky native of that country, intent on theft or barter, set his profane foot within the hallowed circle, and was immediately saluted with a volley of threats and missiles from the outraged soldier whose meal he had spoiled. The bewildered wretch would take to flight across the camping-ground, plunging through the kitchens, defiling dinners by the score, and, in whatever direction he turned, rousing about his ears a swarm of indignant hungry Brahmins". Sir George adds that if any sepoy was inclined to become lax in his observances, his latitudinarian tendencies were checked by the holy men attached to each regiment.

If the story of the greased cartridges is to be read in this context, there would be left no

*Trevelyan, pp. 18-19.

doubt that the proximate cause of the uprising was the fear of loss of religion caused by the real or imaginary content of the objected grease.

Reorganization after rebellion.

As from November 1, 1858, on which the Queen's proclamation was read in India, the Company's armed forces also passed under the Crown. The Crown forces in India now consisted of :

(i) the Presidency Armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay ;

(ii) the Punjab Frontier Force, which consisted of 14 new battalions and the troops of the old Punjab Irregular Force ;

(iii) the Hyderabad Contingent, and

(iv) the Irregular units.

The Bengal Army was greatly reduced because except for some battalions which had remained loyal to the Company, the rest had been disbanded. All the British officers were given the Queen's Commission and brought on a common roll. Indian officers received the Viceroy's Commission. All the European forces were enlisted into the British units of the Indian Army and the distinction between Royal and other troops was finally removed. All the forces were now dressed in *khaki* and became the common forces of the Crown.

Other reforms were also made and a general reduction in expenditure was effected in 1861. The strength of European personnel was limited to 80,000 men. Indian artillery units had also been disbanded. But it was not until 1895 that the three Presidency Armies were unified into one single Army of India.

Brigadier Rajendra Singh, the noted soldier and writer of many useful military and general books, pays the following tribute to the Indian soldiers of 1857 : "His success and failure both throw light on the great qualities of the Indian soldier ; he was prepared to lay down his life for the cause he cherished, he had only to be clear of his loyalty. Those who turned revolutionaries, fought and died for the freedom of the country ; they had their great qualities of courage, valour and sacrifice ; while those who remained firm to the Company and gained victory for it, displayed their inherent loyalty, discipline and integrity."*

*From his book under print, *History of the Indian Army*, Chapter 8.

APPENDIX B

SOME SKETCHES—INDIANS

I. RAO SAHEB
II. RANA BENI MADHAV SINGH
III. AZIMULLAH KHAN
IV. AZIZAN

I. RAO SAHEB

Early life—Pandurang Rao was one of the five sons of Madhava Rao who had married three wives; Rao Saheb was the only son from his third wife. As a result of the adoptions made by Baji Rao II, Rao Saheb also became one of his adopted sons, Nana Saheb being the principal adopted son becoming the head of the family on Baji Rao's death. Rao Saheb's original name was Sita Ram, but when Baji Rao adopted him he gave him the name of Pandurang Rao. The members of the family, the servants and other people called him Rao Saheb by which name he is commonly known. During Baji Rao's time he lived in the Peshwa's family as one of his sons. At Baji Rao's death, Nana Saheb, as head of the family, treated him as before and there was no change in his boarding and lodging arrangements; at the same time Nana Saheb began to pay him an allowance of Rs 200 a month for his personal expenses. Little is known of his early life—he came into prominence only after the outbreak of the mutiny at Kanpur. At that time he was 30 years of age.

Part in the rebellion—Rao Saheb took a prominent part in the rebellion although at his trial he maintained that he was neither a rebel nor a leader of the rebels, nor ever fought against the Government. He explained that Nana Saheb, Bala Rao, and Tatya Tope were the real leaders and masters of the army. As regards his part at Kalpi and the fight with the British, he stated that he was under the authority of Tatya Tope and of the army, and so had to go wherever the army went. Dr. Sen has explained that Rao Saheb made this statement just to save his own skin—Tatya Tope had already paid the penalty of his life and Nana Saheb and Bala Rao were beyond the reach of the authorities. Actually, Rao Saheb was one of the prominent leaders of the revolt and the part taken by him in it has already been noticed in the relevant chapters.

Proclaimed Peshwa at Gwalior—Rao Saheb was proclaimed Peshwa or the head of administration on June 3, 1858, at Gwalior which he, along with Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope and the Nawab of Banda, had captured. A grand darbar had been assembled for the purpose at which a large assembly of guests was present. The sardars, noblemen, bankers, merchants and the representatives of the people were seated according to court precedence. A special seat was provided for Tatya Tope; he was seated with his Rohilla, Afghan, Pathan and Rajput

commanders in their colourful uniforms. It was a spectacular scene.*

Rao Saheb himself was dressed in the traditional royal robes of his family ; round his neck was a necklace of large pearls and strings of diamonds. On entering the darbar, the attendants, in red and gold robes, hailed him and the whole assembly paid him homage by standing in their seats. Vedic prayers were chanted as the Peshwa ascended the throne and a salute of 101 guns marked his formal accession as the new ruler.

The sardars offered their swords to the Peshwa in token of their allegiance and he touched them to signify his acceptance of their homage. They also received his sincere thanks and robes of honour and titles. All present congratulated the Peshwa for establishing Indian raj and reviving the glory of the country. The spirit of liberty was reborn and all felt the glow of freedom.

A large party of Brahmans was fed for two weeks ; in return they prayed for the Peshwa's victory and prosperity.

All this impressive ceremony was intended to create a new rallying point for the rebels all over the country. It was now expected that the Maratha princes in the South would rise in a body to side with the Peshwa whose family still commanded love and sympathy in that region. Only forty years had passed since the Peshwa family of Poona lost its kingdom to the British.

The Rani of Jhansi had, however, her own views in the matter and she was right. In her opinion this was the time for the consolidation of their position and for the making of preparations to meet the British attack which would not take long in coming. To spend time and energy in these outward shows would avail nothing against the enemy. She had advised accordingly and in order to show her disapproval she had the moral courage to stand aloof from the ceremonies. Later, she again gave out her mind, but in the flush of victory which had easily brought much treasure, military equipment and a large and trained army her words went unheeded. The result was that Sir Hugh Rose had little difficulty in uprooting the rebel forces from Gwalior which was re-taken on June 18, 1858, after it had been in the hands of the Peshwa for 18 days. The Rani of Jhansi was killed in defending the attack.

Subsequent fights and wanderings—After the loss of Gwalior Rao Saheb, accompanied by Tatya Tope, the Nawab of Banda and some army, left Gwalior. Two or three days later when they were at a distance of some thirty miles away from Gwalior a detachment of the British force came in pursuit. In the battle which followed Rao Saheb was defeated again and his guns captured. The party then went from place to place followed by the British, and engagements took place every now and then. Rao Saheb with Tatya Tope also crossed the Narmada more than once. They were later joined by Firoz Shah, but even so fared no better.

The British negotiate for his surrender—his refusal—Rao Saheb along with Firoz Shah had separated from Tatya Tope after the disaster of Sikar. The British commanders were after them and tried to cordon the Sironj jungle in which the two had taken shelter. The whole forest was searched and the rebel camp was discovered, but the British could not lay hands on Rao Saheb and Firoz Shah who had again disappeared. The two leaders had, however, now no hope left and some overtures to the British commanders for negotiated surrender were made.

On February 19, 1859, two persons were arrested near Nimach, who claimed to be envoys from the rebel camp and in whose possession two letters were found. In one

*Tahmankar, page 158.

letter a clear explanation of the terms of the Queen's proclamation was asked for and amnesty sought on behalf of Rao Saheb and Firoz Shah. It was stated in it that if these two leaders were convinced of safety, not a single soul would remain in arms against Government. The other letter stated that the limit for surrender fixed in the Queen's proclamation was January 1, 1859, to which a further extension of six months was allowed by a marginal note on the proclamation. It added that if the leaders of the revolt could be assured of safety then they would surrender themselves. The Superintendent of Nimach, Captain Dennys, sent a reply to the effect that with regard to every one who surrendered under the proclamation the promise made therein would be rigidly observed and that this applied equally to Rao Saheb and Firoz Shah as to common soldiers.

Later, near about March 14, an agent of Rao Saheb had been to Sir Robert Napier with peace proposals which enumerated the items of indulgence which Rao Saheb expected to receive from the Government. The agent received the reply that Rao Saheb had already been previously informed that only his life would be spared and further that he would not be treated with personal indignity It appears that Baba Saheb Apte, son-in-law of Maharaja Baji Rao, who was occupying a high rank under the Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior and who was in the good books of the English had pleaded with the Government on behalf of Rao Saheb as well as of Nana Saheb and Bala Saheb. He had addressed a letter to Sir Robert Hamilton, the Governor General's Agent in Central India. who replied to say that if Rao Saheb surrendered, his life would be pardoned, that he would not be put into irons or imprisonment, would suffer no indignity and that a provision would be made for his maintenance. Also, that he would have to reside in such part of India as the Government may fix for him. It was added that these terms were being made to him provided he had not, with his hand or tongue incited or caused the murder of British subjects. But Rao Saheb preferred not to surrender on these terms.

Capture, trial and death—After separating from Tatya Tope in the Peron jungle Rao Saheb wandered about disguised as a mendicant in the territories and jungles of Gwalior and Tonk. He had with him three persons, one Umrao (a Muslim gentleman), a personal servant and one another. After a few days, the two other men left him, his personal servant staying with him.

Sometime afterwards, Umrao came back with Rao Saheb's wife and her old mother. With these ladies with him, Rao Saheb considered it improper to stay in the jungle. So he came to Pushkar near Ajmer. After this, he went to Thaneshwar in the Punjab, then to Jaipur and Delhi. He had adopted the name of Lakshman Das Pandit. He had a mind to go and take shelter in Kashmir and with that object first went and stayed at Chandini in the Jammu territory.

In the meanwhile, he sent his wife's mother to Kashmir, but he himself remained at Chandini with his wife who was expecting a child. Here he used to go to a temple at a distance of three miles from the town. One day when he came out of the temple and was about to mount his horse, he was met by a mendicant who accosted him. This man was Bhima Rao who had been with Tatya Tope at the time of the Kanpur uprising and who had been imprisoned at Kanpur by or at the instance of Rao Saheb. After staying with Rao Saheb for a month and a half he went away saying that as there was now no danger for him (Bhima Rao), he was going home. Sometime afterwards, this Bhima Rao returned with the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot by whom Rao Saheb was arrested.

Rao Saheb was brought to Kanpur for trial. In his statement before the court Rao Saheb vehemently denied that he had any hand in the massacre of the English at Kanpur. That his statement was true was borne out by the

enquiry which Colonel Williams had made much before his arrest about the Kanpur happenings. Of the sixty-one witnesses examined by that officer none accused Rao Saheb of committing, abetting or even inciting the murder of any Europeans. But, as Dr. Sen observes, "Bibighar had to be avenged and Rao Saheb had to atone for the sins of others". So in the trial, fresh witnesses were produced and these obliged the Government by testifying to his guilt. The result was a foregone conclusion—he was found guilty on August 20, 1862, and was hanged at Bithoor in front of his own palace.*

The story is told and believed by the people of Bithoor that before the time fixed for his execution, Rao Saheb had expressed a desire to have a dip in the holy Ganga, which was granted. For this purpose he was taken to the bank of the river without the chains being removed from his hands and feet as a measure of caution against his possible escape. In the meanwhile news was carried to the officer in charge of the execution that if Rao Saheb was allowed to enter the stream, even with chains on, the authorities would not get him back because, feigning to take a dip, he would make a deep dive and would reappear at a distance of several miles thus making good his escape. The officer was told by those near him that people had seen his diving feats and that what had been conveyed to him confidentially would certainly come to pass. The officer then arranged for Rao Saheb to be bathed with the holy water outside the stream ; he was not allowed to enter the river for a dip.

And thus ended the eventful life of a brave and honourable patriot who, in association with Tatya Tope, played a leading role in the rebellion. It is a pity that enough is not known about this hero who violently shook the foundations of British rule. Let us hope that some inquisitive scholar will, in his time, supply the deficiency.

II. RANA BENI MADHAV SINGH

One of the noblest heroes of 1857, Rana Beni Madhav Singh (or Baksh) spurned all offers of the British Government inviting him to surrender. He fought to the last and was eventually killed at the head of his troops in Nepal while fighting against the Gurkhas of Maharaja Jung Bahadur, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of Nepal. He was one of the few top leaders of the revolt who died a soldier's death on the field of battle.

The Rana belonged to a high-class Khattriya family of Bais Rajputs of Avadh. He was quite advanced in age at the time of the rebellion, but little is known of his early life. His father, Ram Narain Singh, was a relation of the Taluqdar of Shankarpur, by name Shiva Prasad Singh. Beni Madhav was taken in adoption by Shiva Prasad Singh who had no heir of his body. By the time of the revolt, Rana Beni Madhav had made a name for himself and was regarded as the chief of the Baiswara clan of Rajputs. He was related to Babu Kunwar Singh of Bihar by the marriage of his son to the latter's daughter. His extensive property included four forts of which Shankarpur was one.

The "mutiny" in the Rae Bareli district had broken out on June 10, 1857, but there were no bloody massacres nor any extensive uprisings. The taluqdars, who had suffered the loss of large parts of their lands on the annexation of Avadh a year ago, became independent and resumed charge of their estates. The most conspicuous of these was

*Whether the execution was carried out at Bithoor or at Kanpur, is not quite clear. D. V. Tahmankar in his *Rani of Jhansi* (p. 173) says that he was hanged at Bithoor. But another version is that he was executed in Tewari Bagh, old Kanpur.

Rana Beni Madhav who kept in the field an army of 15,000 men and sent military aid to Lucknow, later going there himself. He had made himself practically supreme in the south of the district. His fort at Shankarpur was famous for its design and strength—it was considered to be one of the strongest in Avadh. Its outer ditch was nearly 8 miles in circumference, and within it there were three separate strongholds, the intervening space being occupied by dense thorn jungles, traversed by a few narrow foot-paths.

Rana Beni Madhav made his influence felt far and wide and, on more than one occasion, actually threatened the road between Kanpur and Lucknow.* It is said that in May, 1858 he had a force of 80,000 at his disposal at Jasanda near Bani some miles from Lucknow on the Kanpur-Lucknow Road.† He was present in the actions at Lucknow and had, along with other leaders, received from Begum Hazrat Mahal a *khillut* binding him to march to the attack on Alambagh.

After the re-occupation of Lucknow by the British force, Begum Hazrat Mahal and her Commanders left the city for different destinations. Rana Beni Madhav returned to his fort at Shankarpur and began preparations for the drawn-out guerilla warfare in which he was second only to Tatya Tope.

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Colin Campbell, was after him, but before attempting to reduce this powerful leader by armed might he extended to him tempting offers for surrender. To this end Sir Colin had the following letter sent to him over the signature of Major Barrow, the Political Agent at headquarters. The letter was dated November 5, 1858, and was sent from the British Camp at Udaipur to ascertain the Rana's intentions about taking advantage of the amnesty promised in Queen Victoria's proclamation :

"The Commander-in-Chief having received the fullest powers from the Governor-General to deal with all insurgents either by force of arms or treaty, as may seem to His Excellency to be right according to the offences and claims to consideration of each individual, sends the Proclamation of the Queen of Great Britain to Rana Bainie Madhoo.

"The Rana is informed that under the terms of that Proclamation his life is secured on due submission being made. The Governor-General is not disposed to deal harshly, but Bainie Madhoo must recollect that he has long been a rebel in arms, and but very recently attacked Her Majesty's troops. He must, therefore, make the fullest submissive surrender of his forts and cannon, and come out at the head of his sepoys and armed followers, and with them lay down his arms in the presence of Her Majesty's troops. The sepoys and armed followers will then be allowed to go to their homes without molestation, each of the former receiving a certificate from the Commissioner.

"When complete surrender and submission has been made, Bainie Madhoo will not have cause to distrust the generosity and clemency of the Governor-General; and even his claims on account of estates he may consider himself wrongfully deprived of, may be heard; but, in the meantime, before submission is made, and the arms of the Rana, his sepoys and followers, publicly laid down, no treating is allowed by the Governor-General.

"The Commander-in-Chief warns Bainie Madhoo to lose no time. His columns are closing round the Rana, and any delay on Bainie Madhoo's part will deprive him of the benefit of the Queen's mercy, and render it impossible for the Governor-General to exercise generosity in his behalf. The fate of himself, of his family, and of his followers, is in his own hands."

With reference to this offer, Rana Beni Madhav explained that he was a faithful subject of the King of Avadh, that one king was all that he could serve and that having pledged his loyalty to Birjis Qadar he could not desert him or his cause.

But though he rejected the offer of a negotiated peace, the Rana was not in a position to bear the onslaught of the guns and the large combined force of the Commander-in-Chief and General Sir Hope Grant when they assaulted his fort on November 11, 1858. Nor had he the resources to withstand a siege

* *Gazetteer of the Rae Bareli District*, p. 151.

† Hope Grant, *Incidents*, pp. 284–6.

by a powerful army equipped with long-range guns. So, with a master-stroke of strategy Rana Beni Madhav evacuated his fortress at the midnight on November 15 with almost all his guns and troops, some 15,000 in number, and a large amount of treasure, going to the jungles of Purai, eight miles from Rae Bareli on the Unnao Road. On the 16th, the British forces occupied Shankarpur, but nothing was found save one or two old guns.

After evacuating Shankarpur Rana Beni Madhav collected together his men at the fort of Daundia Khera on the Ganga and strongly entrenched himself in the jungles until attacked by the Commander-in-Chief in person on the 24th November. On his refusal to surrender here too, the fort was stormed. In the action Beni Madhav lost 500 dead, or drowned in the Ganga. He then proceeded to the north-west and ultimately, after fighting several guerilla actions, found his way to Nepal.

An account of his many exploits must be left to be read elsewhere, but here it may be recorded that up to the last Rana Beni Madhav stuck to his uncompromising fidelity to the Begum of Avadh—he rejected all offers of amnesty made to him by the Commander-in-Chief. Having sworn to fight for her, the Rana, even in his extremities, never wavered in his consistency to the Begum and her son, Prince Birjis Qadar. He "certainly professed a great zeal for the cause of the deposed King and maintained an obstinate resistance to the last. His loyalty was possibly genuine ; but there can be no doubt that he was highly incensed with the British Government on account of the loss of so many of his villages at the summary settlements."*

A more ennobling reason for Beni Madhav's refusal to surrender lay in the fact that he had given his word of honour to the son of a friend of his, who had fled to him to escape being hanged—his father and brother having already been executed on account of the displeasure of the authorities. Beni Madhav had assured him of protection and it was to honour that assurance that the valiant Rana held back from the British. While the authorities, in their overtures to him, had promised him all consideration, Beni Madhav knew that the fugitive young man with him would not be spared. On this subject, Sir William Russell wrote as follows in *The Times* of January 17, 1859 :

"A kinsman and great friend of his resided, at the time of the outbreak, on his estates between Allahabad and Futtehpoor The Commissioner (Chester), aware of his character, wrote to him to say that he was to remain in his house, and give us such aid as he could render. He did so : he provided coolies, transport and stores for our troops. Some Sikhs quarrelled with his villagers ; and in the fight, it is said, a few men lost their lives. The zemindar was called in to Futtehpoor, and he and his elder son were hanged The second son fled to Bainie Madhoo for protection, and was assured that he would never be abandoned. Out of the 223 villages on Bainie Madhoo's estates, 119 were taken from him on the second revision, after annexation : but, as he was assured that any complaints of unjust treatment in former days would be considered in the event of his submission, it must be supposed he had some strong personal feeling at work (to account) for the extraordinary animosity he has displayed against us".†

While in Nepal he had to face the threats of Maharaja Jung Bahadur who, as an ally of the British, could not tolerate the presence of the nationalist leaders in his kingdom. He wrote threatening letters to the Rana and others. "If your troops will not disperse and leave this country, the British forces will soon come up from the southward and from the westward and the Goorkhas shall advance from the northward and from the eastward and shall attack them, and they will so entirely destroy them that no traces of their existence, not even their names, shall remain", so wrote Maharaja

Gazetteer of the Rae Bareli District, 1905, p. 147.

†Quoted by Montgomery Martin in *The Indian Empire*, Vol. II, p. 498.

Jung Bahadur to Nana Saheb, Rana Beni Madhav and Mammoo Khan, in a letter of September 1859.* He required them to "lay down their arms at the *Towleywa Cutchery* and proceed quietly to their homes in the British provinces. The door of pardon is still open to all who have not committed murders."

As regards their families Maharaja Jung Bahadur said : "If your females and children do not desire to leave the country, we shall not force them to do so, but they shall remain in it subject to the conditions we formerly made with them, that is they shall hold no communication with their relatives in the plains of India, nor with other persons, British subjects there, nor with any one except by our permission".

He concluded by saying . "I advise you to leave this country and to throw yourself at the mercy of the British Government"

Several of the leaders did follow Maharaja Jung Bahadur's advice, but not the valiant Rana. In consequence, Jung Bahadur made good his threat by sending a strong force against him. In the ensuing battle the Rana and his brother, Gajraj Singh, and many of their faithful followers fell fighting.

Thus perished the great hero of Shankarpur. But in so dying for his country and his principles he has left behind an example of unique valour and self-sacrifice. There is no memorial to him save in the hearts of a grateful people, and in the country ballads that are still sung in his praise.

Speaking of the character and sincerity of Rana Beni Madhav Singh, Montgomery Martin writes : "Bainie Madhoo, the Rana of Shunkerpoor (another Rajpoot of similar rank to Lal Madhoo Singh, and whose son had married the daughter of Kooer Singh), abandoned his fort on the approach of Lord Clyde† (November 15), and marched off, with his adherents, treasure, guns, women, and baggage, to join the Begum of Oude and Birjis Kudder, who was, he said, his lawful sovereign, and must be obeyed as such. He proved his sincerity at heavy cost ; for—though offered his life, his lands, the redress of injuries, the full investigation of grievances—he rejected all, and became a homeless wanderer in the Terai, for the sake of the Begum and her son, to whom he had sworn fealty".

Like a true Rajput, the Rana used his sword only in the field of battle. He had not raised his hand against unarmed Europeans or their helpless women and children. In the records of the Government his name appeared only in the list of "rebels", and not also of those who stood charged with murder and atrocities.‡

The Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief and the Chief Commissioner of Avadh were in their heart admirers of the Rana for his valour and high descent. For this reason they were genuinely anxious for his co-operation and friendship. This is evinced by the fact that they made repeated endeavours to secure his surrender while he lived ; after his death the Government granted to his minor son, then 14 years of age, lands yielding an income of Rs.6,000 a year. The authorities were also solicitous about the upbringing of the boy who was sent to receive his education at Sitapur.§

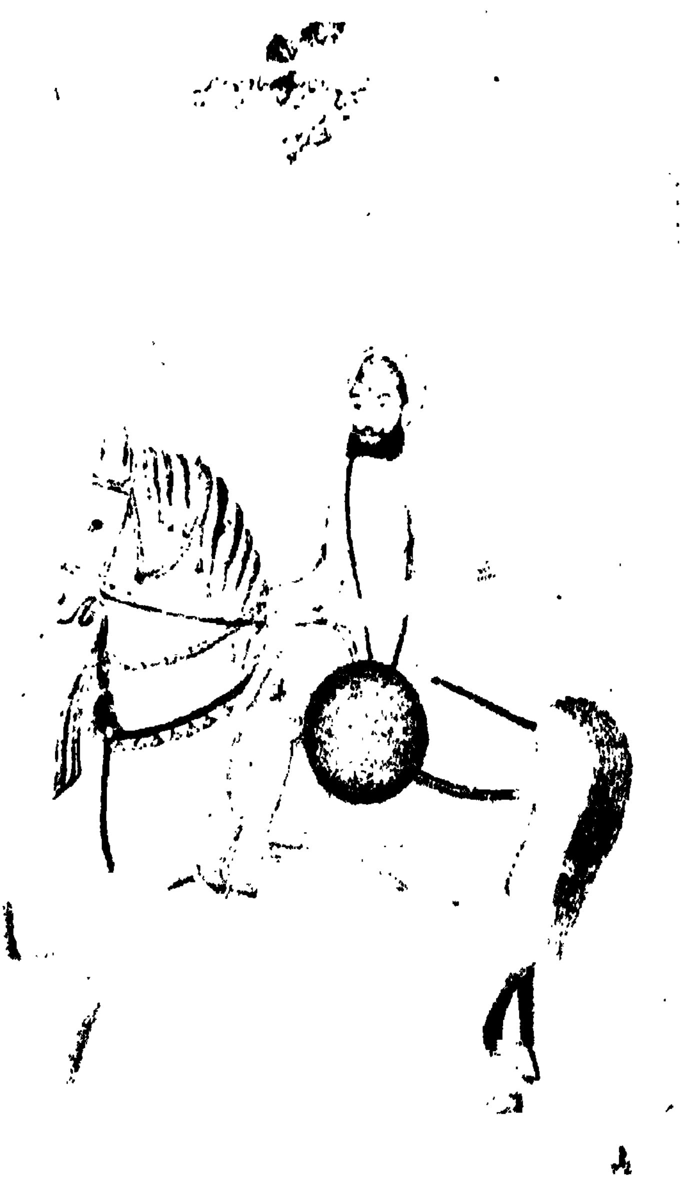
Rana Beni Madhav was greatly loved and admired by the people of Avadh. To this day, they sing ballads in praise of his heroism and his principles. These are mostly sung on the occasion of the Holi

Foreign Political Consultations, 30th September 1859, Nos. 204–6, National Archives.

†Sir Colin Campbell the Commander in Chief who later became Lord Clyde.

‡Letter from the Commissioner, Lucknow Division, to the Chief Commissioner, Avadh, no. 238 of May 30, 1859 quoted at page 588 of *Freedom Struggle in U. P.*, Vol. II.

§Foreign Department Proceedings, nos 213 15, March 9, 1860.



RANA BENI MADHAV SINGH

Spurning all lures and [illegible] offers of the British, he preferred the life of a homeless wanderer in the Nepal terai for the sake of the Begum and her son. By falling on the field of battle Rana Beni Madhav Singh consecrated his name as a man of great valour and heroism, as a man of genuine patriotism.



AZIMULLAH KHAN

[illegible] Azimullah Khan served Nana Sahib with deep devotion. When in England to protect the interests of his master, he greatly impressed the aristocrats of London in whose society he was soon [illegible]. With his [illegible] and cultivated manners he was much admired by high class English ladies among whom he moved with natural [illegible]

festival. A portion of one of the more popular of these is being given here :

> अवध में राना भयो मरदाना ।
> पहली लड़ाई भई बक्सर मां,
> सिमरी के मैदाना;
> हुवां से जाय पुरवा मां जीत्यो,
> तबै लाट घबड़ाना । अवध में० ।
> भाई, बन्धु औ कुटुम्ब-कबीला,
> सबका करौं सलामा;
> तुम तो जाय मिल्यो गोरन से
> हमका है भगवाना । अवध में० ।
> हाथ में भाला, बगल सिरोही,
> घोड़ा चलै मस्ताना । अवध में० ।।

III. AZIMULLAH KHAN

Azimullah Khan had begun life as khidmatgar or foot-man in an Anglo-Indian family. In spite of the handicaps of his profession, he soon acquired a thorough knowledge of the English and the French languages. Later, he studied in a school at Kanpur. For some time he was a teacher in the same institution. It was at this time that Nana Saheb who had now succeeded Baji Rao came to know about him and took him in his own service as vakil or prime agent.

The above account of him by Captain Mowbray Thomson is somewhat different from that of Shepherd who says that Azimullah Khan was a charity boy having been picked up together with his mother during the famine of 1837-38 ; that the mother though in a state of starvation would not consent to her son being christened. He received his education in a mission school at Kanpur where he was paid a monthly scholarship of Rs.3 while his mother served as an ayah. After finishing his studies which ran up to a period of 10 years he became a teacher in the same school, leaving that job to become ultimately attached to Nana Saheb.†

In his *Diary*, a reference to which has been made later in this note, Azimullah Khan makes a mention about himself. He says that he was a Muslim orphan when he was taken to the palace of Baji Rao who brought him up with great affection. This version is thus at variance with what has been recorded about him by the writers just mentioned.

Before Nana Saheb received a reply from the Court of Directors in London rejecting his memorial for Baji Rao's pension, he had sent Azimullah Khan to England to plead his case with the Home authorities. He reached London in the summer of 1853 and was cordially welcomed by London society. To the Londoners every Indian visiting England was a prince or a nawab. Azimullah Khan was also thought to be one of this class. There was nothing unusual in this because he carried with him diamonds and Kashmiri shawls and a charming personality—all of which enchanted English ladies of distinguished families. He was given all sweet flattery and was held on the same footing as the Prime Minister of Nepal or the *ex*-Ruler of the Punjab. He soon made a name amongst the titled ladies of London and was moving in high society. It is said that in the parks of London crowds of women collected to have a look at the great Prince of India, as Azimullah Khan was known amongst the Londoners. Not a few English girls showed their keen desire to marry him and wrote to him expressing their feelings freely.

But none of these things, nor an audience with Queen Victoria, availed him in furthering the cause of his master. The authorities of the East India Company did not cancel

†Shepherd's *Personal Narrative of the Outbreak and Massacre at Cawnpore*, p. 14.



[illegible] ZAN

W[illegible] lady asked to call on [illegible] General Havelock [illegible] Azizan declined. As the [illegible]

the order of the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, by which the *ex*-Peshwa's pension had been stopped at his death. Azimullah Khan had, for his assistance in this mission, an Englishman named Mr. Biddle.

Azimullah returned disappointed to India and was able to satisfy his master that the Board of Control of the East India Company had influenced the Ministers of the Queen of England against the justice of his case.

On his way back to India Azimullah paid a visit to Constantinople at the time when the British were suffering defeat at the hands of the Russians in the Crimea. There he heard and saw for himself the superiority of the Russian power over England, and on reaching India he informed the people that the down-fall of British rule in India was approaching. The famous journalist, Sir William Russell, who had met him at Constantinople has recorded the following description of Azimullah Khan : "I went down for a few days to Constantinople and, while stopping at Misseri's Hotel saw, on several occasions, a handsome slim young man of dark-olive complexion dressed in an oriental costume, which was new to me, and covered with rings and finery. He spoke French and English, dined at the *table d'hote* and, as far as I could make out, was an Indian prince who was on his way back from the prosecution of an unsuccessful claim against the East India Comany in London."

He stayed for a while with Sir William at the Crimean front 'to see those great Roostums--the Russians—who have beaten the French and the English together'. There he saw the British army in a state of depression and formed a very unfavourable opinion of its morale and physique in comparison to that of the French. He was also enabled to see—through the good offices of Sir William who obtained for him a pass from the British General--Russian batteries at work against the English and the French Soon after he had to leave the camp suddenly in an early morning, and as Sir William was asleep he scribbled a note for him saying 'Azimullah Khan presents his compliments to Russell, Esquire, and begs to thank him most truly for his kind attentions, for which I am most obliged'.

Kaye has described Azimullah Khan as "a young and astute Mohammedan, with a good presence, a plausible address, and a knowledge of the English language". He dressed himself in fine clothes and was looked upon as an Indian prince by the gentry of London. The high society of the metropolis was attracted towards him and English ladies of good families sought his favours.

Kaye records that though outwardly Azimullah Khan was a gay, smiling, voluptuous sort of person, intent always upon the amusement of the hour, he was inwardly brooding over some unexpressed feelings. It was for that reason that Rango Bapuji, who was still resident in England then, was attracted towards Azimullah Khan. Rango Bapuji was a person of rare ability and perseverance and fought the case of the Satara princes for the restoration of the principality which had been annexed in 1848 on the death of the ruler, Shahji, without issue. He too, like Azimullah Khan, did not succeed in his mission.

Both persons are said to have planned, on their disappointment with the Directors, schemes against British rule in India. Though not reaching an unequivocal conclusion, Kaye has hinted at this possibility by observing : "Though of different race and different religion, these two men were knit together by common sympathies and kindred tasks, and in that autumn of 1853, by like failures and disappointments to brood over and the same bitter animosities to cherish. What was said and what was done between them no historian can relate. They were adepts in the art of dissimulation." *

*Kaye, Vol. I, page 150.

Several Indian writers have held that these two gentlemen had in fact prepared schemes to be put into action on their return to India, Azimullah Khan in the North and Rango Bapuji in the South.†

Azimullah Khan's Diary

This *Diary* is an unpublished document in the possession of one Suraj Pratap of Pratapgarh, who calls himself the grandson of Nana Saheb. His claim has not, however, been accepted by the Uttar Pradesh Government to whom he made several representations. The original book is in Urdu and Suraj Pratap claims that it is in the handwriting of Azimullah Khan himself. A Hindi transliteration of it has been published by Sri Durgesh Pratap Narain Pande. The noted historian, Dr. Ishwari Prasad, has written a foreword to the Hindi version in which he observes that so far as the question of the authenticity of the *Diary* is concerned, it is necessary to prove it, but that apart from this it has its own importance. The Uttar Pradesh Government have expressed grave doubts about its genuineness. The *Diary* which is a short booklet gives a brief account of the parentage and early life of Nana Saheb ; the part he played in the 1857 struggle ; his marriage with the Princess of Sangli ; an account of Baji Rao and other miscellaneous matters. References to it have been made at several places in the present book.

After Nana Saheb's defeat in the battle of Kanpur and his evacuation from Bithoor, the British made a search of his palace and appurtenant buildings and there discovered bundles of letters addressed to Azimullah Khan by high class ladies of London—letters which were couched in terms of the most intimate friendship. He had continued to receive such letters from England and France on his return to India. Some of the letters were written in French. They later found their way to England to be published under the title *Indian Prince and English Peeress*—"Prince", because the London people continued to believe that Azimullah Khan was an Indian ruler.

Nothing is definitely known about the last days of Azimullah Khan although it is said that he died at Bhutwal some time in October 1859.* In fact the published records make little mention of him after the first battle of Kanpur when Nana Saheb, on being defeated by General Havelock, left Kanpur for good. It is probable, however, that he went to Macca where he obtained an important appointment under the Cherif of Macca who later sent him as a political agent to Constantinople. Possibly, he lived in Macca and Constantinople for some thirty years and at the latter place died at the hands of an assassin for political reasons which had some connection with the Sultan of Turkey. Further particulars about this have already been given in Chapter 42, dealing with the last days of Nana Saheb.

Azimullah Khan was the chief adviser and confidant of Nana Saheb, and it is the view of British historians that he was the brain behind the uprising at Kanpur, that he had also a prominent hand in the organisation of the rebellion throughout the country.

Writing about Azimullah Khan, Dr. Sen has observed that he was a remarkable person. "It is no discredit to him that he was a man of humble origin and had once earned his living as a lowly waiter. He improved his position and educated himself. He learnt to read, write and speak English and French and became a school-master, not a mean achievement for a man who started life with

†Rango Bapuji had stayed in England for several years even after the failure of his mission. He was now without funds because the Satara Princes had no further interest in him. He was involved in debt and the authorities of the East India Company, in spite of the troubles which he had given them over the Satara case, repaid his debts and, in addition, gave him 2,500 pounds and a free passage to India where he returned in December, 1853.

*Dr. Sen, page 368.

so many handicaps. Nature had endowed him with well-favoured features and a charming personality, to which he added, by his own efforts, cultivated manners, and when he reached England he was admitted to the best society where he moved with natural ease. It was no small compliment to his accomplishments that he won the affection of elderly matrons of the British aristocracy, and fair maidens found in him an object of love and admiration in spite of 'the shadowed livery of the burnished sun'."†

IV. AZIZAN

"Oh woman ! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy and hard to please ;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou."

—SIR WALTER SCOTT,
The Battle of Flodden Field.

This lady played an important part in the uprising at Kanpur. At the very beginning of the revolt she collected a squad of Indian ladies, brave and fearless. The members of this party put on male attire and went riding on horses, with sword in hand, telling the people about the nation's war. They also tended wounded sepoys and looked after their comforts. They distributed milk, fruits and sweetmeats amongst the sepoys. When needed, they also helped in reaching supplies and ammunition to the fighters at the entrenchment, regardless of the fire from the enemy. All this was the result of the inspiration provided by the example of courage and devotion of this great lady, Azizan.

In his *Diary*,‡ Nanak Chand has praised the bravery of Azizan saying that she was always armed and present at the batteries helping the sepoys, that she was greatly attached to them and that Azimullah Khan was specially enamoured of her.

On Sunday, June 7, a proclamation was issued in two languages abjuring all true Hindus and Muslims to unite in the defence of their religion and to rally round the Nana. The call was promptly obeyed by all. "Azeezan, the Demoiselle Theroigne of the revolt, appeared on horse-back, amid a group of her admirers, dressed in the uniform of her favoured regiment, armed with pistols, and decorated with medals".*

In Colonel Williams' enquiry, Jankee Prasad, a merchant of Kanpur, deposed that Azizan lived in Lurkee Mohal and was very intimate with the men of the 2nd Cavalry and was in the habit of riding armed with the sawars. "The day the flag was raised, she was on horse-back in male attire decorated with medals, armed with a brace of pistols, and joined the crusade. I saw her as thousands of others did also." **

Azizan was arrested on the recapture of Kanpur. She was brought before General Havelock who was struck by her surpassing beauty. He could not believe that such a good-looking woman could have the manly qualities which she possessed. He suggested that if she showed repentance and apologised her life could be spared. But she refused the offer. When asked what she wanted, her bold reply was : "I want the destruction of the British." She was ordered to be shot dead. As several bullets penetrated her body she cried 'Nana Saheb Ki Jai'. No sigh of pain escaped her mouth. General Havelock was left perplexed by her bravery.

†*Eighteen Fifty seven*, pages 126-27.
‡Under entry dated Friday, June 19, 1857.
*Sir George Trevelyan, page 99.
**Evidence of Jankee Prasad, merchant of Kanpur, deposition no. 22 at page 53.

This account of her death appears in the book, *San 1857 Ki Chingariyan,* by Shriniwas Balaji Hardikar of Kanpur who is well-known for his knowledge of the events in Kanpur and Bithoor during the rebellion. Doubt about its correctness, however, arises from the fact that Azizan herself was one of the witnesses in the enquiry conducted by Colonel Williams after the restoration of British authority. She could not, therefore, have been executed by General Havelock as in the version of Sri Hardikar. At all events, the matter cannot be said to be free from doubt.

In the same book Sri Hardikar has also written that Azizan was the lady who instigated the murders in Bibighar. Here also there appears to be some confusion. According to the enquiry of Colonel Williams there was another woman, called the Begum who, according to the Colonel, is said to have carried the order for the massacre of the prisoners to the sepoy-guard placed over them and who, on their refusing to execute it, is said to have returned to fetch five men to finish the prisoners. This woman, named Husainee Khanum, was one of the four slave girls of Baji Rao. On his death she came under the control of Nana Saheb who continued her in his service.

It was about this girl, the Begum, that several witnesses in Colonel Williams' enquiry deposed that the order for the killing of the prisoners was brought by her. Again it was apparently this lady whom Mohammad Ali‡ had in mind when he told Forbes-Mitchell that a lady was behind the Bibighar massacre, but that he (Mohammad Ali) knew not the motive which prompted her to do this foul act. In these circumstances it is not correct to associate the name of Azizan with the massacre at Bibighar.

Colonel Williams also refers to another woman named Adla and writes about her thus: "Adla, by birth and profession a courtesan, born at Mugrasa, resided with the Nana from 1850, and from receiving Rs.200 p.m. and becoming a favourite, was, it is said, endowed with the jewels belonging to the widows of the late Peshwa, valued at Rs.50,000. On the Nana's flight from Bithoor, she was sent in a boat some distance up the river; but returning to Cawnpore in August 1857, was secreted in a house in the Butcher-khana, went from thence to Misreepore, zillah Humeerpore, and is now said to be at Mugrasa, near Kanpur, under the care of a man named Mundhoo; having promised, she states, to await one year at Kanpur the return of the Nana to that station. The sister of Mundhoo, named Kareena, resides with Oojagur Dobey, of Dahabey, zillah Cawnpore, and the jewels are said to be secreted in his house".*

But this lady too seems to be different from Azizan, because according to the evidence in Colonel Williams' enquiry. Azizan was in the keeping of Seth Kalloo Mal of Kanpur, while Adla was residing at Bithoor under the care of Nana Saheb since the days of Maharaja Baji Rao (1850).

Azizan was a lady of great charm and beauty. Though a dancing girl by birth she was second to none in the love of her country for which she made the supreme sacrifice. She could easily have continued to live a luxurious life, but when the banner of freedom was raised she could not sit idle; the flame of freedom in her was so intense that she staked her all in the cause of the country. She set an example of Indian womanhood by her daring, her power of organization and her patriotism. The people of Kanpur and Bithoor still cherish her memory with kindly thoughts.

‡A note on this gentleman will be found in Section III of Appendix D.

*Colonel Williams' *Memorandum,* dated March 29, 1859, pages 20-21.

APPENDIX C

SOME MORE SKETCHES—EUROPEANS

I. LORD CANNING

II. SIR COLIN CAMPBELL (*LORD CLYDE*)

III. GENERAL SIR HUGH ROSE

IV. BRIGADIER-GENERAL NICHOLSON

ANNEXURE : LORD CANNING'S LETTER TO QUEEN VICTORIA

I. LORD CANNING

(1812–1862)

A short note on Lord Canning is here being given as it was during his Governor-Generalship that the rebellion had broken out, that the British authority was re-established and the administration passed from the East India Company to the British Crown. It was he who, under the new dispensation, became Governor-General on the one hand and Viceroy, representing the Crown in its relations with the Indian Princes, on the other. Though in the suppression of the revolt many evil things were done by British commanders and others without his approval and for which the moral responsibility must rest on Lord Canning, his sincerity of purpose, his goodness of spirit, his benevolence of character have been universally recognised—even by his severest critics of whom not a few were Europeans. It was an irony of fate that with the inherent humanity of his nature, he was criticised by a Cabinet Minister of England as having been too harsh, while the European community in India characterised him as being too lenient in his measures for the suppression of the mutiny.

Lord Canning was born in 1812 as the third son of George Canning, one of the most attractive of British statesmen. George Canning had a celebrated career in England; he was a Cabinet Minister for some years and ultimately rose to be Prime Minister. He had held that office for six months when death separated him from it in 1827. Earlier, in 1822, he had accepted the office of Governor-General of India, but when his ship was about to sail he received the offer of Foreign Secretaryship which he was glad to accept, abandoning his journey to India.

The younger Canning received his education at Eton and Oxford where he won many distinctions. After taking his University degree and celebrating his marriage, he entered the House of Commons, but shortly afterwards on the death of his mother in 1837 he became a Peer and sat in the House of Lords. After being for a short time Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs he became a member of the Cabinet during Lord Palmerston's Prime Ministership. Later, he was appointed Governor-General of India on Lord Dalhousie's retirement.

The Court of Directors of the East India Company gave him a banquet on the eve of his departure for India ; there he uttered

words which were almost prophetic of the rebellion which was to come a year after. He said : "In the sky of India, serene as it is, a small cloud may arise, at first no bigger than a man's hand, but which, growing bigger and bigger, may at last threaten to overwhelm us with ruin."

He took charge of his office in February 1856 and immediately plunged himself in his duties with his characteristic energy. It took him several weeks of hard work to be able to get abreast of current events.

Lord Canning was both laborious and conscientious in his work. He went to the very depth of every question, and minor problems received as much of his attention as weighty questions of State. It was a quality of his temperament that he did not treat small things as small but gave them the same determined care as to matters of importance. It is said of him that he was never content with anything short of perfection.

Lord Canning had not been long in office when the grave signs of intending rebellion began to show themselves. For teaching the use of the recently-introduced Enfield rifles to sepoys, Rifle Depots had been established at different centres. The use of the new rifle involved the biting with teeth of cartridges which were lubricated with grease. The rumour went round that the grease included cows' fat, which was abhorrent to the religion of the Hindus, and pigs' fat which a Mohammedan could not touch under the canons of his faith. Many cases of insubordination occurred in the process of forcing the cartridges on the sepoys. There were also mysterious fires in several military stations. All these were premonitory signs of the rebellion which broke out finally at Meerut in May 1857.

The course of the rebellion and the methods adopted to suppress it have been dealt with in appropriate chapters. Here, we need only briefly refer to the character of Lord Canning in dealing with the situation. His liberal and just temperament urged him to the policy that justice and patience should be the key-note of the Government in dealing with the rebels, once they had ceased their resistance. His countrymen in India would, however, press him to adopt a policy of vengeance which was so opposed to his conciliatory inclinations. Shortly after the outbreak at Meerut, Lord Canning issued a proclamation in which he insisted upon the necessity for discrimination in the treatment of the rebels. The Europeans in India denounced this as too lenient a measure ; in their derision they gave him the title of 'Clemency Canning'. But these very men afterwards were fair enough to acknowledge that this title was the highest honour which could have been bestowed upon him.

In his letters to England he expressed himself against ruthless repression ; in a letter to Queen Victoria he wrote : "There is a rabid and indiscriminate vindictiveness abroad even among those who ought to set a better example." But Lord Canning was not unnerved by the accusation of the European community about what they called his undue leniency. He was hurt, of course, by the charge of undue severity which a Cabinet Minister had brought against him. This charge had reference to Lord Canning's proclamation to the landholders and inhabitants of Avadh, a proclamation by which all except a few Taluqdars were to lose their proprietary rights in land. But while making this proclamation he had separately expressed his opinion that the punishment of forfeiture was to be enforced with an indulgent hand and was to be altogether remitted on timely submission or other valid ground. Further, the actual terms of the proclamation made it quite clear that the British Government would liberally treat all those who threw themselves on the justice and mercy of Government. Upon this proclamation Lord Ellenborough, a Cabinet Minister, wrote to Lord Canning desiring him to mitigate the severity of the decree of confiscation. In reply Lord Canning explained that

his policy, if steadily pursued, offered the best and the earliest prospect of restoring peace upon a stable footing. He concluded by saying that he was prepared to resign if, after a careful consideration of all the circumstances, his policy did not commend itself to Her Majesty's Ministers.

It must also have caused great pain to the noble Lord to hear that certain politicians in Parliament had attempted, though unsuccessfully, to get his name excluded from the vote that was passed by the British Parliament early in 1858, thanking the civil and military officers of the Company for their zeal in the suppression of the mutiny.

Lord Canning shifted his headquarters from Calcutta to Allahabad in the beginning of 1858 in order to be able better to supervise the military operations. At the same time he took over the administration of the North-Western Provinces. He had to put in very hard work on account of this additional duty in addition to the important work of reconquest. This caused a great strain on his health.

After British authority was restored, and after the Governor-General Canning also became the Viceroy on the transfer of the administration to the Crown, he devoted himself to the task of constructing peace and the reforms connected with it.

Lord Canning lost his wife during the concluding year of his Indian career. She died towards the end of 1861 and was buried in a park at Barrackpur within a few miles of Calcutta. On her tomb-stone Lord Canning had the words inscribed . 'Honours and praises written on a tomb are at best a vain glory'. Lady Canning's death was mourned by large numbers in India for her nobility of character, pleasing manners and all that goes with English womanhood. *

A letter which, on her death, Lord Canning wrote to Queen Victoria is reproduced in the annexure to this appendix.

In March 1862, Lord Canning handed his office to Lord Elgin. When he left India a week later he was described as "looking pale, wan, toil-worn and grief-stricken" on the day of his embarkation. His health had completely broken down and it was as if the great administrator was returning home only to die. His end came in June of the same year in the 49th year of his age. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, a place reserved for the burial only of the Sovereigns of England and its noblest sons.

Lord Canning's administration was just and honourable on the whole. He was always considerate in passing orders and sometimes his sense of justice and fairplay stood in the way of taking immediate decisions. In consequence, he was accused of wavering and undue leniency.

The conduct of Lord Canning in restoring order had been the subject of a tribute, more befitting his character than many others, by Mr. Wilson, the first Finance Member of the Government of India, on the occasion of his first Budget speech in 1860 when he said:

"The future historian of India will dwell with pride upon the fact that India was governed during this period of disturbance by a noble man who never, in the midst of the greatest peril, allowed his judgment to be swayed by passion or his fine sense of honour and justice to be tarnished by even a passing feeling of revenge."

There are many more tributes to the work and character of this noble Englishman, and these could be read in Sir H. S. Cunningham's *Earl Canning*, but we may conclude this sketch by Lord Curzon's words: "Neither let them forget the Viceroy, Canning, calm amid the tumult, silent in the face of obloquy, resolute through all upon the great and crowning lesson of mercy."

* During the Mutiny, Lord Canning had a tremendous amount of labour to do at the desk. Like a true wife, Lady Canning shared in this toil, often copying out for him confidential minutes of great length.



LORD CANNING

in his reply to Queen Victoria acknowledging the dignity of the first Viceroy of India, he wrote: "It is Lord Canning's earnest hope and prayer that so long as this high function shall be in his trust, it may be administered in a spirit not unworthy of your Majesty, and that when he shall deliver it again into your Majesty's hands, it may be found to be without spot or stain from any act or want of his." *Handing over his office to Lord Elgin he sailed for* England in March 1862, worn out by incessant work and grief-stricken by Lady Canning's death. As if he had returned home only to die, "Clemency" Canning, a broken-hearted man, was overtaken by death in June of the same year leaving behind a name for magnanimity and inflexible justice.



SIR COLIN CAMPBELL

He [illegible] fellow-feeling with his soldiers [illegible] they [illegible] would never sacrifice his [illegible] he fought against the hill [illegible] objected to burning villages [illegible] interference of civilians in military [illegible] Governor-General Lord Dalhousie. On a [illegible] resign his post but was destined soon to [illegible] England. He was then in his 69th year.



SIR HUGH ROSE

The love which his soldiers bore him is thus testified in the words of Sir Hugh Rose himself: "These noble soldiers never preferred one complaint. They fell in their ranks, struck down by the sun and exhausted by fatigue, but they would not increase the anxieties of their General or belie their devotion by complaint. No matter how great their exhaustion or how deep their short sleep, they always sprang to my call to arms with the heartiest good will." It was the privilege of Sir Hugh Rose to fight against the Rani of Jhansi, and it was his nobler privilege to pay to the departed Queen the highest tribute which a soldier has ever paid to a soldier: "the bravest of the brave."



GENERAL NICHOLSON

[illegible] his affectionate mother

II. SIR COLIN CAMPBELL (LATER LORD CLYDE)

(1792—1863)

When the mutiny broke out, General Anson was the Commander-in-Chief in India. He died suddenly from cholera when proceeding from Ambala for the relief of Delhi. Sir Colin Campbell, then 65 years of age, was appointed by the Queen to the Supreme Command in India on July 11, 1857. On receiving the appointment he said : "Never did a man proceed on a mission of duty with a lighter heart and a feeling of greater humility." He was in London then. On being asked when he could be ready to start, 'tomorrow' was his answer, and true enough he set out for India the very next day, July 12, 1857.

Sir Colin Campbell was a Scotchman, having been born in Glasgow in 1792. At the age of 16, he entered the army and in his early career distinguished himself in fighting campaigns. In one of the engagements he was severely wounded and was lying in hospital. Before his wounds were healed he left his bed to take part in another attack. This breach of military discipline was, however, overlooked on account of the personal gallantry which he had again displayed.

Later, he took part in the war of 1812, between America and England ; also in the China War and in the Second Sikh War. He received the distinction of K. C. B. for steady coolness and military precision in the operations.

He had hoped to retire from active service after the Sikh War, but could not be spared as he was required in the Crimean War which had now broken out. His wish to retire at the end of the Crimean War could not also be fulfilled, although he had reached an age when one could justly claim to be permitted to live a restful life. His country needed him for service in India to fight the great rebellion.

Sir Colin took up his command in India in August 1857. The Commander-in-Chief in India was in charge of all military operations, but Sir Colin Campbell personally conducted only the northern ones leaving his lieutenant, Sir Hugh Rose, to conduct the operations in Central and South India.

Sir Colin Campbell's personal campaigns included the final capture of Kanpur (when he defeated Tatya Tope in the last battle of Kanpur in December 1857), and the relief of Lucknow. Delhi had already been retaken when he was at Calcutta. But he exercised direction and control over all military operations against the leaders of the rebellion. The qualities which made Sir Colin a great General were his extreme caution and thoroughness which allowed him to leave nothing to chance. He always prepared all his plans most carefully beforehand and in this work he gave extraordinary care to details. He laid down his office in 1860 after British authority had been completely restored. He received the Peerage under the title of Lord Clyde. Afterwards he was created Field-Marshal. He died in 1863 in his seventy-first year and was buried in Westminster Abbey, the resting place for the great men and women of England.*

In the annals of the Mutiny, the name of Sir Colin Campbell is ranked amongst the saviours of British rule in India, which, but for men like him, would have disappeared in the storm of the great revolt. At the same time it ought to be recorded that, though he was relentless in his military operations, he consistently disapproved of oppressive measures against those in arms or the brutal treatment of suspects by the civil authorities. On more than one occasion he emphatically protested against such inhuman proceedings which have tarnished many an English name of those days.

*"He died lamented by the Queen, the Army, and the people', are the words inscribed on his tomb-stone.

III. SIR HUGH ROSE—AFTERWARDS LORD STRATHNAIRN

(1801–1885)

Prior to the mutiny, Sir Hugh Rose had seen no service in India. He was sent out to India in September 1857 and landing at Bombay took over the command of the Poona Division. Before touching on his campaigns for the suppression of the rebellion, his earlier career may first be noticed.

He was born in Berlin and began his military career in the British Army, which he entered as an ensign in 1820 at the 19th year of his age. He sought service in Ireland and Malta and received early promotions not so much on account of military qualifications as on account of the courage and humanity which he showed during an out-break of cholera among his troops at Malta. He visited every sick man of the regiment, encouraging everyone round him by his activity and cheerfulness. He chiefly distinguished himself during the Turco-Egyptian war in Syria.

For a time he served as British Consul-General for Syria. While on this post he gave proof of his cool presence of mind, a quality which aided him all through his career. Civil war was going on between two hostile sections of the Syrian population and one day he found the opposing forces firing at one another. Without hesitation and at great risk to his life he rode between them and succeeded in stopping the fight by the sheer force of a strong will.

He served also in the Crimean War against Russia, acting as the Queen's Commissioner with the French Army and carrying the rank of Brigadier-General. During the operations before Sebastopol he displayed conspicuous gallantry for which the French Commanders thanked him deeply.

Mention here might be made of an incident during the Crimean War in which he created a great impression on the Russians. The story is briefly told thus in the words of a Russian officer : 'He (the Russian officer) had seen through the mist, a tall gaunt figure riding leisurely down the road under a withering fire from the whole line of pickets; the horseman turned neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor could the Russians hit him. Suddenly, they saw him fall headlong with his horse. After a few minutes, paying no attention to the firing, the mysterious horseman got up, patted his horse, and led the animal leisurely back up the road. The Russians were so awe-struck that an order was sent along the line to cease firing on the man'.*

For his services in the Crimean War the British Government conferred on him the honour of knighthood.

Thereafter he began his Indian career in command of the Poona Division as already stated. Three months afterwards in December 1857, he was appointed Commander of the Central India Field Force, which was to subdue the rebellion in Bundelkhand, Central India and Malwa ; the Commander-in-Chief himself being engaged in reducing Avadh and the North-Western Provinces. Sir Hugh Rose conducted these operations with great military skill. It is on record that in five months Sir Hugh Rose's force traversed one thousand and eighty-five miles, crossed many large rivers ; captured two fortified cities and two fortresses, all strongly defended ; fought sixteen actions ; captured twenty smaller forts, and never sustained a check against the most warlike and determined enemy led by the most capable commanders then to be found in any part of India. In recognition of his services the Queen of England gave him a signal honour by creating him a Grand Commander of the Bath. Parliament also thanked him profusely.

* Oswell, Vol. I, pages 76-77.

Sir Hugh Rose was, after the conclusion of his task with the Central India Field Force, appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army in 1859. The following year he succeeded Sir Colin Campbell as the Commander-in-Chief in India.

On return to England after serving for five years as Indian Commander-in-Chief the distinguished General was made a peer and he selected the style of "Lord Strathnairn of Strathnairn and Jhansi". Later, he received the highest military rank of Field-Marshal. He died at Paris in 1885.

The secret of success of Sir Hugh Rose lay in the fact that he always made to the post of danger never sparing himself or others. He did everything with courage, thoroughness, earnestness, unflinching devotion to duty. His rapid marches and indomitable energy had created great impression on the rebels and their leaders. The principle which he followed in dealing with them was : "When your enemy is in the open go straight at him and keep him moving ; when behind rampart, still go at him, and cut off all his chances of retreat when possible : pursue him, escaping or escaped".†

IV. BRIGADIER-GENERAL NICHOLSON

(1822—1857)

In common with all men of distinction John Nicholson had his failings—and to these we shall refer later—but the most noble thing about him was his deep affection and profound reverence for his mother, a pious lady with faith in the true values of life. She did all she could to make her children upright and conscientious and it is to her that Nicholson owes his reputation as a man of integrity and high character. In this connection a letter which she wrote to John at school will bear reproduction. He was then in his twelfth year, and had spent more than the amount of his weekly allowance ; it was this lapse which gave the occasion for the subjoined letter written on April 24, 1837 :

MY DEAREST CHILD,—I would have *met* your wishes and answered your last letter immediately, but have had a return of the pain in my side, which (while it continues) quite prevents me using my right arm. . . . I rather think you misunderstood your uncle, nor would I *write* to him, as I know he is living *too fast*, and finds it enough to meet his own expenses. Should he remember, well and good, but on no account *whatever* would I expose myself to the imputation of being *covetous*. I will, for *this time*, give you the money you require. In *future* you must be content with your weekly allowance. What other boys have or do, cannot be a rule for *you*, who are the son of a widow with five boys to educate. Do not then, John, feel any false shame at not having money; such a feeling might lead to SERIOUS ILL-CONSEQUENCES.

"Say honestly, openly, you can't afford such or such a thing as may be proposed. I feel no shame at saying I can't afford to enter into the same expenses as Mrs. Scott or Mrs. Cleaver do I want you to be an open, manly character, *afraid of nothing* but of doing what is wrong. You will, if you are *diligent* in your studies now, have the opportunity of gaining an honourable independence hereafter. In the meantime you must endeavour to acquire good principles, good habits, and a sufficient degree of knowledge and information to carry you respectably through life, and ever bear in mind that without a good character, education cannot serve you. Mr. Ormsby told us in his sermon last night, that if we *prayed as we ought*, we would strive to live as we prayed. Think of this, dearest, and ask yourself, how do I pray . . . . ."

Nicholson carried these words of his mother as the breast-plate of his character as regards "gaining an honourable independence hereafter" and being "afraid of nothing".

The place which his mother occupied in his heart was so deep-rooted that Nicholson felt no necessity for taking a partner in life. The letters exchanged between them, and which are preserved, form valuable pieces in

† Oswell Vol. I, page 82.

English literature. One of them has just been quoted ; here is another from John :

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I came here this morning from Peshawur, where I have been spending a few days with the Edwardes. You will see by the papers that preparations are in progress for the establishment of a Mission at Peshawur. I have given 500 rupees towards it on your account, but my name will not appear on the subscription list, as for certain reasons I have preferred subscribing anonymously.

"If you have not received any rent from the Caldbecks, I would ask you not to take any. It would seem to me inconsistent with the friendly relations which I believe exist between you, to take rent for accommodation which one friend should be happy to have an opportunity of affording another.

"Where do you think of spending the coming summer? I hope you will go to the sea-side ; sea bathing seems to agree so well with you and Lily. . . . —Yours affectionately, J. NICHOLSON." *(Written from Camp Kohat, April 13, 1854).*

In 1850, Nicholson had decided to go to England on furlough. This decision was influenced by his constant illness during the preceding ten years, but one special reason for this determination was his thought for other people than for himself. His own brother William had died in India following an accident and John Nicholson, always full of thoughtfulness for his mother, felt that he was needed at home to help her bear this calamity.

Apart from being a dutiful son, Nicholson was a considerate friend. In 1854, a post of Commandant fell vacant in the Punjab Frontier Force, for which Nicholson submitted an application. A little later he came to know that one of his old friends, Colonel Chamberlain, was a candidate for it. Nicholson lost no time in withdrawing his application and at the same time writing to Chamberlain saying that his (Chamberlain's) claims were greater than his own ; that he wished him all success.

For years after his arrival in India, Nicholson had been in ill-health. But he had a strong determination which enabled him successfully to overcome this handicap. Once he was in bed with a severe attack of fever when Sir Henry Lawrence, Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, came to tell him about a local rebellion. "Never mind the fever ; I will start to-night". This is what Nicholson told Sir Henry. Writes a brother officer, who was present when Nicholson, forgetful of his fever, attended the call of duty : "Never shall I forget him as he prepared for his start, full of that noble reliance in the presence and protection of God, which, added to an unusual share of physical courage, rendered him almost invincible. It was during the few hours of his preparation for departure that his conduct and manner led to my first knowledge of his true character, and I stood and watched him —so full of spirit and self-reliance, though only just risen from a sick-bed—with the greatest admiration."

It is good that he did not marry for no dame Nicholson could have long put up with his fiery temper. His outbursts of anger were frequent and in that state of imbalance he often used to strike. On account of this weakness he was in continuous quarrel with colleagues and senior officers some of whom were excellent men.

About 1850, Sir Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, having received several reports about Nicholson's quick temper, decided to give him a brief friendly advice. "Don't think it is necessary to say all you think to everyone", observed Sir Henry. "The world would be one mass of tumult if we all gave candid opinions of each other. I admire your sincerity as much as any man can do, but say thus much as a general warning. . . . From what I saw in camp, I think you have done much towards conquering yourself ; and I hope to see the conquest completed".

The reply of Nicholson was characteristic. After making a feeble defence of having spoken openly to the English officers of the Punjab army in condemning their habit of plundering the natives, though he was aware his doing so had brought upon him much

unpopularity, he proceeded to thank Sir Henry for the 'friendly advice'. "I am not ignorant of the faults of my temper and you are right in supposing that I do endeavour to overcome them—I hope with increasing success. I readily admit that my temper is a very excitable one, and wants a good deal of curbing. A knowledge of the disease is said to be half the cure, and I trust the remaining half will not be long before it is effected."

For the life and career of General Nicholson, the reader must turn to his interesting biography by Captain J. L. Trotter, and to the unique collection by Sir John Kaye, entitled *Lives of Indian Officers* (1889). Here, we shall content ourselves by saying that this distinguished soldier and administrator, who died in the fulness of youth at the age of 35, was born in 1822 in Ireland as the third son of a physician, Alexander Nicholson; that in 1839 he entered the Bengal Army and soon saw service in the First Afghan War, 1839—42; that he distinguished himself in this and other campaigns; that in 1847 he was in charge of a district in the Punjab where he did much to pacify the country after the First Sikh War. He was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Bannu on the annexation of the Punjab, and in that capacity became a kind of legendary hero with many tales of his stern justice, tireless activity and towering personality. Among these stories, one relates to the occasion when, on being attacked by a *ghazi*, he snatched the musket from a sentry's hand and shot the assailant dead. On another occasion he put a price on the head of a notorious outlaw, but finding no one daring enough to earn it, himself rode single-handed to the man's village and, meeting him on the street, cut him down. It is no wonder then that the villagers worshipped him as a god under the title of *Nikalsain*.

Though a severe officer, Nicholson was eminently just—he would personally go to the scene of a crime or a legal dispute to settle the matter on the spot. In criminal cases, he gave the offender a chance to redeem his character.

He was one of the Commanders of the British Force which had collected to recapture Delhi. Amongst a wavering group of senior officers, Nicholson forced the issue of an immediate assault on the city and was himself chosen to lead the attacking column. On the morning of September 14, 1857, he led a thousand troops in the attack on the walled city and succeeded in entering it.* Thereafter, he tried to clear much more ground than his wearied troops could undertake. As they hesitated, he turned back to encourage them and in that condition received a mortal shot. His powerful physical frame, however, preserved his life for nine days whereafter he breathed his last on the 23rd following.

By an unfortunate irony, a serious estrangement took place between the two friends, Nicholson and Colonel Chamberlain, and efforts at reconciliation bore no fruit for long. Though Chamberlain made some overtures of good feeling, Nicholson remained adamant. At last, Sir John Lawrence succeeded in restoring the broken friendship which lasted till the death of Nicholson when Chamberlain most devotedly and untiringly nursed his dying friend. So, in his last moments the gallant General had the comfort of the presence of one of his closest friends—a comfort which everyone would wish to have at his last hour.

In his "Mutiny" report, Sir John Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, wrote thus: "Brigadier-General John Nicholson is now beyond human praise and human reward. But so long as British rule shall endure in India, his fame can never perish. He seems

* Nicholson led his column in person and was the first to mount the ladder to gain the walls.

especially to have been raised up for this juncture. He crowned a bright, though brief, career by dying of the wound he received in the moment of victory at Delhi. The Chief Commissioner does not hesitate to affirm that without John Nicholson Delhi could not have fallen".

And the author would close this sketch by copying a touching letter which Nicholson's mother wrote to the Prime Minister of England after her son was no more :

Letter from the mother of John Nicholson to the Earl of Derby, Queen Victoria's Prime Minister.

"My Lord, As the mother of General Nicholson, I beg leave to submit to your Lordship's consideration the following statement.

"I have lost three sons in the Indian army in defence of Her Majesty's dominions. My first was at the siege of Jellalabad, and was killed in the Kyber Pass. My second fell a victim of fever at Suken, that grave of Europeans. My third General Nicholson, who earned for himself the fatal but glorious distinction of leading the assault at the storming of Delhi. Of him my Lord I need not speak. His deeds are unperishable, and it was a mournful gratification to one to read your Lordship's eloquent and generous tribute of praise to his memory, spoken in the House of Lords at the opening of the session. From my heart I thank your Lordship for it.

"I have still, thank God, one son remaining, and he lost his right arm at the siege of Delhi in command of Coke's Rifles. He was invalided and sent home. It is for him I now solicit the honour and favour of your Lordship's powerful patronage. I cannot bear the thought that my only surviving son should return to India, where his three (brothers) found an early grave. My request is that your Lordship will kindly give him some government appointment either in England or Ireland that will keep him at home.

"That your Lordship may know what situation he is qualified to hold, pray allow me briefly to give an outline of his twelve years' service in India: First, an infantry officer through all the Punjab campaign, for which he got a medal, was Aide-de-Camp to Sir J. Thackwell at the battle of Chillianwallah, and his regiment, the 31st, received the thanks of the General in command. He was at the end of the campaign transferred to the Punjab Cavalry by Sir H. Lawrence, first as adjutant and afterwards second in command. The two years previous to the Mutiny he acted as Captain of the Punjab Police Force for the officer in command, who was in Europe on medical certificate.

"On the officer's return, my son rejoined his own troop, and was with it at Delhi. But when all the principal officers of Coke's Rifles were either killed or wounded, he volunteered to take command of them . . . . and on that memorable day led them into action, when he lost his right arm. . . . I remain, Your Lordship's humble and obedient servant, C. NICHOLSON"*

I slept and dreamt that life was beauty ;
I woke and found that life was duty.

*This letter bears no date. It has been quoted by Giberne Sieveking in his *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*, pp. 210-17.

ANNEXURE

[Referred to at page 564]

LETTER FROM LORD CANNING TO QUEEN VICTORIA INFORMING HER OF LADY CANNING'S DEATH

(November 22, 1861)

Lord Canning presents his humble duty to your Majesty. Your Majesty will have heard by the last mail of the heavy blow which has fallen upon Lord Canning. The kindness of your Majesty to Lady Canning has been so invariable and so great that he feels it to be right that your Majesty should receive a sure account of her last illness with as little delay as possible.

The funeral is over. It took place quite privately at sunrise on the 19th. There is no burial-place for the Governor-General or his family, and the cemeteries at Calcutta are odious in many ways: Lord Canning has, therefore, set a portion of the garden at Barrackpore (fifteen miles from Calcutta) apart for the purpose. It is a beautiful spot, ... shaded from the glare of the sun by high trees, and amongst the bright shrubs and flowers in which she had so much pleasure.

Your Majesty will be glad, but not surprised, to know of the deep respect which has been paid to her memory, not only by the familiar members of the household and intimate friends, ... but by the Civil and Military bodies, and by the community at large. . . . .

Lord Canning feels sure that your Majesty will not consider these details as an intrusion. He feels sure of your Majesty's kind sympathy. She loved your Majesty dearly, and Lord Canning is certain that he is doing what would have been her wish in thus venturing to write to your Majesty. In the last connected conversation which he had with her, just before the illness became really threatening, she said that she must write again to the Queen. . . .

Whether all might have gone differently if the first plan* had been held to, God alone knows. His will has been done.

THE QUEEN'S REPLY

(January 10, 1862)

Lord Canning little thought when he wrote his kind and touching letter of the *22nd November, that it* would only reach the Queen when she was smitten and bowed down to the earth by an event† similar to the one which he describes—and, strange to say, by a disease greatly analogous to the one which took from him all that he loved best. . . . .

To lose one's partner in life is, as Lord Canning knows, like losing half of one's body and soul, torn forcibly away—and dear Lady Canning was such a dear, worthy, devoted wife! But to the Queen........it is not that only, it is the stay, support and comfort which is lost! To the Queen it is like death in life! Great and small—nothing was done without his loving advice and help..

....

May God comfort and support Lord Canning and may he think in his sorrow of his widowed and broken-hearted Sovereign—bowed to the earth with the greatest of human sufferings and misfortunes! She lived but *for* her husband!

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*Lady Canning was very keen to be present at Allahabad at Lord Canning's magnificent investiture darbar, but was persuaded to stay back at Darjeeling by Lord Canning who entreated her not to undertake the fatiguing journey of 900 miles in unpropitious weather.

†The death of Prince Consort, on December 14, 1861, at Windsor.

APPENDIX D

NOTES OF GENERAL INTEREST

I. A SON'S REVENGE

II. REBEL EUROPEANS

III. SAD END OF ENGINEER MOHAMMAD ALI KHAN

IV. INDIAN SWORDS

I. A SON'S REVENGE

This is the story of an unusual revenge by a son for the death of his father. On March 14, 1887, that is about thirty years after the mutiny, Major A.H.S. Neill, Commander of the Second Regiment, Central India Horse, was shot dead on parade at Augur in Central India. This Major Neill was a son of the well-known Brigadier-General Neill, commanding at Kanpur during the mutiny. The person who shot him was Mazar Ali, a sawar of the same regiment and a son of Suffar Ali, dafadar of the Second Regiment, Light Infantry, who had taken part in the uprising at Kanpur.

After the recapture of Kanpur by General Havelock, large numbers of persons were immediately arrested for having taken part in the massacre at the Sattichaura Ghat and Bibighar. One of these was this dafadar Suffar Ali who was accused of having cut off General Wheeler's head at the Sattichaura Ghat on June 27, 1857, just when the General alighted from his palki at the edge of the bank to go to his boat further into the water. He was tried and, though he stoutly denied the charge, was sentenced to death under the summary orders of General Neill to which a reference has been made in Chapter 27. Suffar Ali was, before being hanged, taken to Bibighar, was flogged by sweepers till he cleaned up the assigned area of the blood-stained floor by licking the blood with his tongue. Just before being hanged, Suffar Ali abjured every Muslim present in the crowd which had assembled to watch the execution to have a message sent to his infant son, Mazar Ali, at Rohtak to the effect that his father had been unjustly defiled by order of General Neill before being hanged and that his dying message to him was to avenge the death of his father on General Neill or any of his descendants.

Mazar Ali, on growing up, had taken service in the army and had served under Major Neill for many years not knowing that he was the son of General Neill whom his father had cursed. The Major on his part had been treating Mazar Ali with special kindness. One day when Mazar Ali was lying ill in hospital a fakir came to him. He told him of his father's dying imprecation adding that it was the decree of fate that Mazar Ali should shoot Major Neill who was the son of General Neill. Mazar Ali carried out the

fakir's behest on parade the next day. No one then knew what the apparent reason was for this cold-blooded murder.

Mazar Ali was tried and sentenced to death. After his execution a leaflet was widely circulated in the bazars of upper India describing Suffar Ali's imprecation and his son's revenge. It was printed in Urdu with an English translation underneath and the latter is reproduced below :

The imprecation vociferated by Suffur Ali, Dufadar, 2nd Regiment Light Cavalry, who was executed at the Slaughter-house, on the 25th July, 1857, for killing Sir Hugh Wheeler at the Sutteechaura Ghat :

Oh Mahomed Prophet ! be pleased to receive into paradise the soul of your humble servant, whose body Major Bruce's Mehtur police are now defiling by lashes, forced to lick a space of the blood-stained floor of the slaughter-house, and hereafter to be hanged, by the order of General Neill And, Oh Prophet ! in due time inspire my infant son Mazar Ali of Rohtuck, that he may revenge this desecration on the General and his descendants.

Take notice !—Mazar Ali, Sawar, 2nd Regiment, Central India Horse, who, under divine mission, shot Major A. H. S. Neill, Commanding the Corps at Augur, Central India, on the 14th March, 1887, was sentenced to death by Sir Lepel Griffin, Governor-General's Agent.

Forbes-Mitchell has given an account of this unusual incident in Appendix 'A' to his *Reminiscences.* The account is based on the information given to Forbes-Mitchell at Jhansi in 1892 by a person who had served in the Company's army and had also been in the service of Maharaja Scindhia of Gwalior before the mutiny, and who was at Kanpur when the rebellion broke out and was also present when the city was retaken by Generals Havelock and Neill. This person had supplied to Forbes-Mitchell a copy of the leaflet which has been reproduced above. Forbes-Mitchell had taken pains to ensure the correctness of the facts which he wrote down and which he believed to be true.

In an issue of the Calcutta *Statesman* a reference to Mazar Ali's case was made. The Editor had himself seen a copy of the leaflet and was left in no doubt that this leaflet was widely in circulation in upper India shortly after Mazar Ali paid the penalty with his life.

II. REBEL EUROPEANS

Strange though it may sound, but it is a fact that several European soldiers joined the rebels and fought with them against the British. In the newspapers issued in 1857-58, reports appeared that Europeans were seen in the ranks of Indian forces. There were talks to the same effect.

One such case was at Lucknow. Here an European soldier was seen directing the artillery fire against the British in the action which took place at Chinhat near the Kukrail river. Mr. Rees, an eye-witness, saw this European wearing his sword and attempting to make his men follow him and dash against the British. "He was a handsome-looking man, well-built, fair, about 25 years of age, with light moustaches, wearing the undress uniform of an European cavalry officer with a blue gold-laced cap on his head." It was suggested that this European was possibly "either a Russian or a renegade Christian".

Another case has been mentioned in "*The Siege of Delhi by an officer who served there*" (name not given), published in Edinburgh in 1861. This European was killed in the battle of Budlee-ki-Sarai. Concluding the description of the battle the author observes : "And sad to tell, an European deserter from Meerut had been struck down fighting in the sepoy ranks, and was recognised by his former comrades." The name of the European has not, however, been mentioned, but from other sources also the point has been verified that he was the very person who had accompanied the mutineers from Meerut to Delhi and fought and died at the above battle.

The same writer again refers to two Europeans fighting on the side of the rebels in the siege of Delhi. It is stated that some British officers saw with their binoculars two Europeans with solar helmets manning the rebel batteries.

Yet another case was of an European who belonged to a regiment of Bareilly. He came to Delhi with the Bareilly Brigade in which he was a Sergeant-major. Emperor Bahadur Shah employed him next below General Bakht Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of the nationalist forces at Delhi. Throughout the siege of Delhi, this officer commanded the rebel artillery. He was described as being the most energetic commander that the rebels had, and they showed him the greatest respect. On the day Delhi was retaken by the British, this Sergeant-major fought most vigorously, riding from post to post, trying to rally the dejected sepoys and bringing up fresh troops to the support of the assailed points.

After their defeat at Delhi the rebels retired to Mathura where the same Sergeant-major was again seen supervising the arrangements for crossing the Yamuna. Thirty thousand troops had collected there under the command of General Bakht Khan, but the sepoys paid more respect to the European Sergeant and implicitly obeyed his orders. Whether he later joined the army of Queen Hazrat Mahal at Lucknow is not clearly established, but after the fall of Lucknow he was seen at Fort Rooyah where Raja Narpat Singh was fighting and where he was put in the command of the sepoys. In the siege which the British laid to that fort, this very Sergeant-major killed Brigadier Adrian Hope by a gun-shot fired from a high tree within the fort.

After the loss of the fort of Rooyah, this Sergeant, along with the sepoys, hid himself in the jungles. Later, the rebels attacked Shahjahanpur and fought several other actions throughout the hot weather of 1858 mostly under his guidance and that of General Bakht Khan.

Eventually, this European officer was forced, along with the sepoys, to take shelter into Nepal territory. There, the sepoys decided to surrender themselves to the British under the terms of the Queen's proclamation in spite of the remonstrances of the Sergeant who told them that they would not be spared by the British. The sepoys, however, were in their extremities and would not listen to him. They sent one person from amongst themselves to gather information as to what had happened to the other parties who had given themselves up to English. He brought the report that all sepoys who had not taken part in murdering European officers were being allowed to return to their villages; were being paid for this purpose Rs.2 in cash and provided with a pass. Most of the sepoys thereupon left Nepal to return to their families after surrendering themselves to the nearest English post. The European Sergeant-major then wept in agony saying that he had neither home nor country to return to. The final fate of this unfortunate European was neither known nor heard of.*

III. THE SAD END OF MOHAMMAD ALI KHAN, THE "REBEL ENGINEER"

Towards the end of February 1858 was executed at the British camp at Unnao a very handsome person in the prime of life dressed in scrupulously clean white clothes. He had been accused and found guilty of espionage in the British lines. This person was Mohammad Ali Khan who belonged to a most honourable family of Rohilkhand and who, after college education, had taken a degree in engineering at the Thomason College,

* Condensed from Appendix B to Forbes Mitchell's *Reminiscences*.

Roorkee, passing out as the best student of his year, gaining many marks in excess of European pupils. He served for some time as a military engineer under the East India Company, but resigned as, under the conditions of those days, he found his service full of disgust and humiliation although he was second to none in his profession. He had been to England twice. How this remarkable person came to be executed as a spy is a pathetic story which has been related at length by Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell in his *Reminiscences.*

After the re-capture of Kanpur by the British, their immediate problem was the relief of Lucknow. Preparations on a large scale were made and a whole army was massed at various places between Kanpur and Alambagh (Lucknow), preparing for a siege of the town. A division consisting of several regiments was encamping at Unnao under the command of General Sir Edward Lugard and Brigadier Adrian Hope preparing for a march to Lucknow within the next few days. Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell was in that camp.

One day came into the camp a person calling out : "Plum-cakes ; plum-cakes ; very good plum-cakes ! Test and try before you buy". Forbes-Mitchell called this man to his tent and was greatly impressed by his deportment and features which were altogether different from those of the usual camp-followers. The man gave out his name as Jamie Green and that of his companion—who carried the basket over his head—as Mickey. Forbes-Mitchell was doubtful whether this person had the necessary licence for visiting army camps, but his doubts were set at rest by Jamie Green who showed an order authorising the bearer by name Jamie Green to visit military camps for the sale of his plum-cakes, in the handwriting of Brigadier Ardian Hope himself.

Forbes-Mitchell was also impressed by the purity and easy flow of English in Jamie Green's conversation which pertained to subjects like the strength of the army, the preparations going on for the siege of Lucknow, and so on. Jamie Green also shared interest in the newspapers which were on Forbes-Mitchell's table and he read them with curiosity saying that he was anxious to know what the English press said about the mutiny. Forbes-Mitchell could not resist his temptation to know how Jamie Green had acquired such fluency in his English. This, the latter was able to account for to the satisfaction of the Sergeant by saying that his father had been a mess khansama of a European regiment, that he himself had been brought-up to speak English from his childhood. These, and certain other circumstances, which he mentioned, left no doubt in the mind of the questioner.

The next day in the evening Forbes-Mitchell was informed that Jamie Green, the plum-cakewallah, had been discovered to be a spy from Lucknow and had been sentenced to be executed. As it was too late to carry out the sentence that night, he was to be kept in custody in the camp rear-guard at which Forbes-Mitchell was at that time on duty. Forbes-Mitchell was sincerely sorry over the fate of this man because, during the earlier day, he had been drawn towards him and had formed a high opinion of his abilities. Soon after, Jamie Green and his companion were brought and handed to Forbes--Mitchell for safe custody till the following morning when they were to be executed.

No sooner that the prisoners were in the hands of Forbes-Mitchell than several soldiers of the guard proposed to bring some pork from the bazar and break the caste of the prisoners—a practice which the British had freely adopted in those days before executing their Muslim prisoners. But Forbes-Mitchell strongly disapproved of such a course and warned his men that if any one attempted to molest the prisoners he would have him arrested for disobedience of orders. Besides, he also said that it would be an act

unworthy of a British soldier. "I shall never forget the look of gratitude which came over the face of the unfortunate man who had called himself Jamie Green, when he heard me give these orders", writes Forbes-Mitchell. The prisoner also at once said that it was an act of kindness which he had never expected and for which he was truly grateful. Then he unhesitatingly pronounced his belief that Allah and His Prophet would requite this kindness by bringing his benefactor safely through the remainder of the war. Forbes-Mitchell thanked him for his good wishes and his prayers and then caused his hands to be unfastened to allow him to perform his evening devotions, and permitted him much freedom.

Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell had little fear of his prisoners attempting an escape, but he decided to keep awake the whole night with the primary purpose of giving his prisoners all possible freedom and privilege during the last night of their earthly existence. After the performance of their evening devotions, a sumptuous meal was provided to them. Jamie Green was also allowed to smoke a hukka and to rest himself on a comfortable rug. Jamie Green expressed his deep gratitude to Forbes-Mitchell, adding, "Doubtless, Allah will reward you, Sergeant Saheb, in his own good time for your kindness towards his oppressed and afflicted servant".

There was a night-long conversation between Forbes-Mitchell and the prisoner whom he had almost begun to love. When asked if it was really true that he was a spy, he said that, in the ordinary meaning of the term, he was far from it. "I am no spy" he said, "but I am an officer of the Begum's army, coming from Lucknow to gain reliable information of the strength of the army siege-train being brought against us. I am the Chief Engineer of the Army of Lucknow and came out on a reconnoitring expedition, but Allah has not blessed my enterprise. I intended to have left on my return for Lucknow this evening, and if fate had been propitious, I would have reached it before sunrise tomorrow, for I had got all the information which was wanted ; but I was tempted to visit Unnao once more, being on the direct road to Lucknow, because I was anxious to see whether the siege-train and ammunition-park had commenced to move." He added that it was his misfortune that at that very time he was denounced as a spy by a person who wanted to save his own neck.

Forbes-Mitchell's interest in the life of his unfortunate prisoner increased because he thought of writing an account of him to his friends in Scotland. Jamie Green gave an account of himself most willingly as this was the only way in which he could return, even in a very small measure, the good turn which the Sergeant had done to him. Here is the story in his own words :

"You ask me what my name is, and state that you intend to write an account of my misfortune to your friends in Scotland. Well, I have no objection. The people of England, and by England I mean Scotland as well, are just and some of them may pity the fate of this servant of Allah. I have friends both in London and Edinburgh for I have twice visited both places.

"My name is Mohammad Ali Khan. I belong to one of the best families of Rohilkhund and was educated in the Bareilly College and took the senior place in all English subjects. From Bareilly College, I passed to the Government Engineering College at Roorkee and studied engineering for the Company's service and passed the senior student of my year having gained many marks in excess of all the European pupils both civil and military. But what was the result ? I was nominated to the rank of Jamadar of the Company's Engineers, and sent to serve with a company on detached duty on the hill roads as a native commissioned officer, but actually subordinate to a European Sergeant, a man who was my inferior in every way except perhaps in mere brute strength, a man of little or no education, who would never have risen above the grade of a working-joiner in England. Like most ignorant men in authority, he exhibited all the faults of the Europeans which most irritate and disgust us—arrogance, insolence and selfishness. Unless you learn the language of my countrymen, and mix with the better educated people of this country, you will never understand nor estimate at its full extent the mischief which one such man does to your national reputation. One such example is enough to confirm all that your worst enemies can say about your national selfishness and arrogance, and make the people

treat your pretensions to liberality and sympathy as mere hypocrisy.

"I had not joined the Company's service from any desire for wealth, but from the hope of gaining honourable service; yet on the very threshold of that service I met with nothing but disgrace and dishonour, having to serve under a man whom I hated, yea, worse than hated, whom I despised. I wrote to my father and requested his permission to resign, and he agreed with me that I, the descendant of princes, could not serve the Company under conditions such as I have described.

"I resigned the service and returned home, intending to offer my services to his late Majesty Nasir-ud-deen, King of Avadh, but just when I reached Lucknow I was informed that His Highness Jung Bahadur of Nepal, who is now at Gorakhpur with an army of Goorkhas coming to assist in the loot of Lucknow, was about to visit England, and required a secretary well acquainted with the English language. I at once applied for the post and being well backed by recommendations both from native princes and English officials, I secured the appointment, and in the suite of the Maharaja I landed in England for the first time and, among other places, we visited Edinburgh, where your Regiment, the Ninety-third Highlanders, formed the guard of honour for the reception of His Highness. Little did I think, when I saw a kilted regiment for the first time, that I should ever be a prisoner in their tents in the plains of Hindustan but who can predict or avoid his fate ?

"Well, I returned to India, and filled several posts at different native courts till 1854, when I was again asked to visit England in the suite of Azeemullah Khan, whose name you must have often heard in connection with this mutiny and rebellion. On the death of the Peshwa, the Nana had appointed Azeemullah Khan to be his agent. He, like himself, had received a good education in English, under Ganga Din, Head-master of the Government School at Kanpur. Azeemullah Khan was confident that, if he could visit England, he would be able to have the decree of Lord Dalhousie against his master reversed and when I joined him he was about to start for England, well supplied with money to engage the best lawyers, and also to bribe high officials, if necessary. But I need not give you any account of our mission. You already know that. So far as London drawing-rooms went, it proved a social success, but as far as gaining our end, a political failure; and we left England after spending over £50,000 to return to India via Constantinople in 1855. From Constantinople we visited the Crimea, where we witnessed the assault and defeat of the English on the 18th of June, and were much struck by the wretched state of both armies in front of Sebastopol.

"Thence we returned to Constantinople, and there met certain real or pretended Russian agents who made large promises of material support if Azeemullah could stir up a rebellion in India. It was then that I and Azeemullah formed the resolution of attempting to overthrow the Company's Government, and Shookr Khooda! we have succeeded in doing that; for from the newspapers which you lent me, I see that the Company's 'raj' has gone and that their charter for robbery and confiscation will not be renewed. Although we have failed to wrest the country from the English, I hope we have done some good, and that our lives will not be sacrificed in vain ; for I believe direct Government under the English Parliament will be more just than was that of the Company, and that there is yet a future before my oppressed and down-trodden countrymen, although I shall not live to see it.

"I do not speak, Sahib, to flatter you or to gain your favour. I have already gained that and I know that you cannot help me any further than you are doing, and that if you could, your sense of duty would not let you. I know I must die; but the unexpected kindness which you have shown to me has caused me to speak my mind. I came to this tent with hatred in my heart and curses on my lips; but your kindness to me, unfortunate, has made me, for the second time since I left Lucknow, ashamed of the atrocities committed during this rebellion. The first time was at Kanpur a few days ago, when Colonel Napier of the Engineers was directing the blowing up of the Hindoo temples on the Kanpur ghats, and a deputation of Hindoo priests came to him to beg that the temples might not be destroyed. 'Now, listen to me,' said Colonel Napier in reply to them : 'You were all here when our women and children were murdered, and you also well know that we are not destroying these temples for vengeance, but for military considerations connected with the safety of the bridge of boats. But if any man among you can prove to me that he did a single act of kindness to any Christian man, woman or child, nay, if he can even prove that he uttered one word of intercession for the life of any one of them, I pledge myself to spare the temple where he worships'. I was standing in the crowd close to Colonel Napier at the time and I thought it was bravely spoken. There was no reply, and the cowardly Brahmins slunk away. Napier gave the signal and the temples leaped into the air; and I was so impressed with the justness of Napier's remarks that I too turned away, ashamed."

Upon this Forbes-Mitchell asked him : "Were you in Kanpur when the mutiny broke out?" To which he replied : "No, thank God ! I was in my home in Rohilkhand; and my hands are unstained by the blood of anyone excepting those who have fallen in the field of battle. I knew that the storm was about to burst, and had gone to place my wife and children in safety, and I was in my village when I heard the news of the mutinies at Meerut and Bareilly. I immediately hastened to join the Bareilly Brigade, and marched with them for Delhi. There I was appointed Engineer-in-Chief, and set about strengthening the defences by the aid of a party of the Company's engineers which had mutinied on

the march from Roorkee to Meerut. I remained in Delhi till it was taken by the English in September. I then made my way to Lucknow with as many men as I could collect of the scattered forces. We first marched to Mathura, where we were obliged to halt till I threw a bridge of boats across the Yamuna for the retreat of the army. We had still a force of over thirty thousand men under the command of Prince Feroz Shah and General Bakht Khan. As soon as I reached Lucknow I was honoured with the post of Chief Engineer. I was in Lucknow in November when your regiment assisted to relieve the Residency. I saw the horrible slaughter in the Secunderbagh. I had directed the defence of that place the night before, and was looking on from the Shah Najaf when you assaulted it. I had posted over three thousand of the best troops in Lucknow in the Secunderbagh as it was the key to the position, and not a man escaped. I nearly fainted; my liver turned to water when I saw the green flag pulled down, and a Highland bonnet set up on the flag staff which I had erected the night before. I knew then that all was over, and directed the guns of the Shah Najaf to open fire on the Secunderbagh. Since then I have planned and superintended the construction of all the defensive works in and around Lucknow. You will see them when you return, and if the sepoys and artillery-men stand firmly behind them, many of the English army will lose the number of their mess, as you call it, before you again become masters of Lucknow."

After his story was finished, Forbes-Mitchell asked him several questions about the incidents of the mutiny at Kanpur. To these he gave straight-forward and convincing answers to which reference has been made in other parts of the book.

Day was now breaking and Forbes-Mitchell permitted his prisoner to perform ablutions and morning prayers. Forbes-Mitchell observes that during his whole conversation Mohammad Ali Khan once and only once showed any weakness when, in alluding to his wife and to two boys at their home in Rohilkhand, he remarked that they would never know the fate of their unfortunate father. But he quickly checked himself saying that having read French and English histories he should show no weakness.

In the end Mohammad Ali Khan took out a gold ring from concealment among his hair and requested Forbes-Mitchell to accept it as a token of his gratitude and to keep it in remembrance of him. He said it was the only thing which he could give as the rest of his valuables had been taken from him when he was arrested. He went on to say that though the ring was worth not more than Rs.10 it was a talisman which had been given to him by a holy man in Constantinople. Mohammad Ali Khan then placed the ring on the Sergeant's finger with a prayer for the wearer's preservation. He also advised his benefactor to look at it and remember him when he, the Sergeant, was in front of the fortress at Lucknow as by doing so no evil would befall him.

Just as he had finished speaking, a guard from the Provost-Marshal came and, with a "sincere feeling of pity" for the fate of his extraordinary prisoner, Forbes-Mitchell made him over to the guard.

Forbes-Mitchell concludes the narrative thus :

" Immediately after, I received orders that the division would march at sun-rise for Lucknow and that my party was to join the rear-guard after the ammunition-park and siege-train had moved on. The sun was high in the heavens before we left the encamping ground and in passing under a tree on the side of the Kanpur and Lucknow road, I looked up and was horrified to see my late prisoner and his companion hanging stark and stiffened corpses ! I could hardly repress a tear as I passed."

During the assault on the Begum's Ḳothi at Lucknow, Forbes-Mitchell remembered Mohammad Ali Khan and looked at the ring. " I am thankful to say", he writes, "that I went through the rest of the campaign without a scratch and the thoughts of my kindness to this unfortunate man certainly did not inspire me with any desire to shirk danger."

Forbes-Mitchell adds that he kept the ring ever afterwards as "the only piece of 'mutiny plunder' I ever possessed and shall hand it down to my children together with the history of Mohammad Ali Khan."*

*Forbes-Mitchell. *Reminiscences*, Chapter X.

IV. INDIAN SWORDS

With the mechanisation of warfare which commenced with the first World War of 1914—18, hand-to-hand fighting has been gradually decreasing. Prior to the invention of gun-powder, swords and spears were the principal weapons with which the soldiers fought. Indian swords far excelled English (Birmingham) swords in strength and cutting capacity. In the 'mutiny', when it came to hand to-hand fighting, those of the sepoys who had Indian swords proved their superiority over the European troops.

The blade of the Indian sword was curved and this added to its effectiveness as a cutting weapon. In comparison, the straight English regulation swords were far too blunt. The edge of Indian talwars used to be so sharp that it could split a hair. Sergeant Forbes-Mitchell in his *Reminiscences* has written, in praise of Indian swords, that in the fight at Lucknow, Indian sepoys armed with indigenous talwars from the armoury of the King of Avadh killed and wounded a large proportion of British troops by sword cuts. He has written at some length on the subject and this note has been condensed from his account.

Forbes-Mitchell has given some incidents to prove the superiority of the Indian sword. In one case during the fighting at Lucknow one James Ready was attacked by a sawar armed with an Indian sword. In one stroke of his talwar over James Ready's head, the sawar severed his skull cleanly in two parts, cutting right through his neck and half way down through the breast-bone. His brother John Ready who came for assistance and pierced his bayonet fatally on the sepoy's side, simultaneously received a blow from the same sword and was cut right through the shoulder diagonally across the chest and his head and right arm were cleanly severed from the body.* Both the combatants fell dead together. In the meanwhile the third brother, Sergeant David Ready, came on the spot, took the talwar which had killed his brothers and himself used it in cutting off, with terrible effect, the heads of men as easily as if they were mere cabbage. After the fight the sword was examined by Forbes-Mitchell who found it of ordinary weight, well-balanced, curved about a quarter circle, sharp as the sharpest razor and as rigid as cast iron.

In another instance, an Indian sepoy had, by one stroke of his sharp curved talwar, lopped off his opponent's right arm, one leg above the knee and wounding the other thigh and the other arm.

In a third case a British officer was hewn into two by a stroke delivered from behind by an Indian sword which cut through an ammunition-pouch severing the officer's backbone and cutting his heart into two.

In those days the test for a good talwar-blade was by using it over a good-sized fish which, wrapped up in cotton quilt, was placed on a *charpai*. If the sword did not cut the fish into two at a single stroke, it was considered of no worth. The blades of Indian swords were forged after mixing in the steel a large quantity of arsenic which added to their strength, preserved the blades from rust and enabled them to be sharpened to a fine edge. The art of making such swords is now a lost one.

Forbes-Mitchell concluded his description by suggesting that experiments be made for improving the straight regulation swords, manufactured in Birmingham, on the lines of Indian talwars which were greatly superior in every way.†

* Such a stroke was called जनेऊ काट ।

†Appendix 'C' in Forbes-Mitchell's *Reminiscences*.

APPENDIX E

CHRONOLOGY OF NANA SAHEB

Note : *The* CHRONOLOGY OF THE REBELLION *appears in Chapter* 17, *entitled "Mutiny at Meerut– Spread of the revolt."*

1824 ..	.. Birth of Nana Saheb in village Venu, taluqa Nastrapur, South India.
1827 .	. Nana Saheb's father, with his family, comes to Bithoor to live as a dependant of Maharaja Baji Rao. In the same year Baji Rao adopts Nana Saheb as his son.
1839, Dec. 11	.. Maharaja Baji Rao executes will making Nana Saheb sole heir to his property and title.
1851, Jan. 28 ..	.. Death of Maharaja Baji Rao ; Nana Saheb succeeds him.
1851, Sept. 15 ..	.. Minute of Lord Dalhousie discontinuing Maharaja Baji Rao's pension to Nana Saheb.
1851-52 ..	.. Nana Saheb submits memorials to the Governor-General and the Court of Directors of the East India Company regarding continuance of Maharaja Baji Rao's pension to him. (The memorials were rejected).
1852, May 18 ..	.. Directors of the East India Company endorse Lord Dalhousie's decision ordering the discontinuance of the pension.
1853 ..	.. Nana Saheb sends Azim Ullah Khan to England to plead his case for pension before the Court of Directors of the East India Company. He reached England in the summer of 1853. The mission was, however, unsuccessful.
1856 (late in the year)	.. Nana Saheb visits Lucknow and other important places in northern India for the ostensible purpose of pilgrimage. It is said, however, that he made these journeys in furtherance of the scheme of the rebellion.
1856 ..	.. Nana Saheb's marriage with the Princess of Sangli. This was apparently his second marriage. The date of his first marriage is not known, but according to the custom of the family and the practice of the times he must have been married during his "teens."
1857, May 22 ..	.. At the request of Mr. Hillersdon, District Magistrate of Kanpur, Nana Saheb comes from Bithoor to Kanpur with his soldiers and guns to guard the treasury and the arsenal.
1857, June 4 ..	.. Second Cavalry and First Native Infantry revolt at Kanpur at night.
1857, June 5 ..	.. The rest of the sepoys at Kanpur rise in arms. Jail at Kanpur broken ; treasury looted. But officers left unmolested. Revolutionary troops march off towards Delhi, halting at Kalyanpur. Nana Saheb brings back the troops from Kalyanpur to attack British entrenchment at Kanpur. Nana Saheb proclaimed as leader of sepoys at Kanpur.

1857		
June 6	.. ..	Nana Saheb heads the revolutionaries at Kanpur. British entrenchment at Kanpur attacked.
June 8	.. ..	General Wheeler requests Nana Saheb to let the Europeans go to Calcutta. Bombardment on entrenchment continues; 3 more guns brought against the British.
June 10, 11, 12	..	Firing continues at Kanpur; many Europeans killed. Revolutionaries fire carcases at the entrenchment.
June 24	.. ..	Nana Saheb issues orders to the Kotwal of Kanpur.
June 26	. ..	General Wheeler surrenders.
June 27	.. ..	Nana Saheb sends carts, *dolies* and elephants for European women, sick and children to be taken to the river-side to proceed to Allahabad. Massacre of Europeans at Sattichaura Ghat. Nana Saheb reviews troops; guns fired in his honour. Letter from Nana Saheb to officers of 41st Native Infantry.
June 30	.. ..	Investiture of Nana Saheb as Peshwa at Bithoor.
July 1	.. ..	Proclamation issued by Nana Saheb.
July 5	.. ..	Order issued by Nana Saheb to the Kotwal of Kanpur.
July 6	.. ..	Another proclamation of Nana Saheb. Proclamation printed by the order of Peshwa Bahadur. Proclamation of Revolutionary Government at Kanpur outlining the organisation of troops.
July 7	.. ..	Nana Saheb's message to the officers of the Army.
July 10	.. ..	Report about Nana Saheb's advance on Grand Trunk Road to meet Major Renaud's detachment.
July 13	.. ..	Nana Saheb's orders to Thanedar of Sirsaul.
July 14	.. ..	Spies at Kanpur beheaded.
July 16	.. ..	Message from Nana Saheb to officers of Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry at Lucknow.
July 16	.. ..	First battle of Kanpur. Revolutionary forces defeated. Nana Saheb leaves Kanpur.
August	.. ..	Proclamation of the reward of Rs.50,000 by the Government of India for the arrest of Nana Saheb.
November 26	.. ..	Sharp fight between Gwalior Contingent and General Windham at eight miles from Kanpur.
November 27	.. ..	Gwalior Contingent attacks Nawabganj, Kanpur. British forces retire into the entrenchment. Revolutionaries attack and retake possession of Kanpur.
December 6	.. ..	Encounter between Sir Colin Campbell and the revolutionaries at Kanpur.
1858		
March 18	.. ..	Government of India announce increase in the amount of reward for the capture of Nana Saheb from Rs.50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000.
September	.. ..	Nana Saheb's proclamation to the people of the South.

1859	
January ..	.. Last engagement of Nana Saheb with British troops under General Sir Hope Grant.
March 28 ..	.. Nana Saheb and the Queen of Avadh reported to be at Butwal.
April 20 ..	.. Nana Saheb's *Ishtiharnama* addressed to the Queen of England and the British authorities in India. Reply sent by Major Richardson to Nana Saheb's *Ishtiharnama.*
April 25 ..	.. Letter from Nana Saheb from Deogarh to Major Richardson. Reply to the above letter transmitted from Dhukhri Camp. Petition from Bala Rao to British Government.
September 24 ..	.. A correspondent of *The Englishman* reports death of Nana Saheb.
November ..	.. Reports circulate again about Nana Saheb's death in Nepal.
1859-60 (Winter)	.. Reported death of Nana Saheb in Nepal, but perhaps not actually died. (Actual date and year of death still a mystery).
1861, Nov. 30	.. Hurjeebhoy arrested at Bombay on suspicion of being Nana Saheb. Later released.
1863, June 22 ..	.. Appa Ram arrested at Ajmer on the same suspicion. Released later.
1874 ..	.. Jamna Das arrested at Ajmer on the same suspicion. Also released later.
1907 ..	.. Reported death of Nana Saheb in Constantinople at the hands of an assassin—version of G. Ward Price in *Extra-Special Correspondent.*

APPENDIX F

EPILOGUE

AN EXPLANATION

"Impey, sitting as a judge, put a man unjustly to death in order to serve a political purpose. No other judge has so dishonoured the English ermine* since Jeffreys drank himself to death in the Tower."† So wrote Lord Macaulay in his famous essay on Warren Hastings. Sir Elijah Impey was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at Calcutta during the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings (1774—85) and the man unjustly put to death was Maharaja Nand Kumar, the reputed nobleman and functionary of Bengal. The political purpose was to get rid of Nand Kumar who had fallen out with the Governor-General, had openly accused him of bribery, and was holding documents in support of the charge. But no sooner had he levelled the accusation against the powerful Warren Hastings than he himself was arrested on a warrant of the Supreme Court and was tried on a charge of forging a bond for a few thousand rupees. A trial was held and Impey obliged the Governor-General by pronouncing a verdict of guilty and sentencing the Maharaja to death against all canons of justice and jurisprudence—there was no evidence worth the name against him, and forgery was not a capital offence in India, though in England it was punishable with death. The sentence was soon carried out and Maharaja Nand Kumar was publicly hanged at the *maidan* of Calcutta on August 5, 1775, an innocent victim of political aggrandisement.

If a judicial murder could thus be committed, it is no wonder that eighty years later another person of repute and respectability was unjustly accused of the baser crime of killing helpless women and children—a crime which he was incapable of committing or sanctioning. But while in the case of Maharaja Nand Kumar an atonement came in the form of impeachment of Warren Hastings and the disgrace of Impey, by the justice-loving people of England, the same people unfortunately continue still to malign the name of Nana Saheb. Thus, in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*‡ the following entry occurs under NANA SAHEB :

> "Nana Sahib, the common designation of Dandu Panth, an adopted son of the ex-Peshwa of the Marathas, Baji Rao, who took a leading part in the great Indian Mutiny and was proclaimed Peshwa by the mutineers. Nana Sahib had a grievance against the British Government because they refused to continue to him the pension of eight lakhs of rupees (£80,000) which was promised to Baji Rao by Sir John Malcolm on his surrender in 1818. This pension, however, was only intended to be a life grant to Baji Rao himself. For this refusal the Nana bore the British a lifelong grudge, which he washed out in the blood of women and children in the massacres at Cawnpore. In 1859, when the remnants of the rebels disappeared into Nepal, the Nana was among the fugitives. His death was reported sometime afterwards, but his real fate remains obscure."

* The fur of an animal of the same name, used in robes of judges and peers, as emblem of purity.

†George Jeffreys was the Lord Chancellor of England during the reign of James II, whose favourite he was. For his high-handedness in the trial of many cases the name "Judge Jeffreys" has become a byword of infamy. After James II fled from the country on the approach of William of Orange, Jeffreys also tried to escape in disguise, but was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. There he died in April 1689 as a result of excessive drinking.

‡Volume 16, 1949 edition.

The description given—'washed out his life-long grudge in the blood of women and children in the massacres at Cawnpore'—reads *prima facie* plausible and convincing in the context. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth. Let us examine :

(*a*) The ex-Peshwa Baji Rao had died in 1851 and the question of pension was finally decided against Nana Saheb in 1853 when his appeal to the Court of Directors failed. Four years afterwards the mutiny broke out. So, if he bore the grudge, can it be called a *life-long* grudge ?

(*b*) Then, if he did bear a grudge, he did it against Lord Dalhousie and the high authorities in England, and never against English women and children who, even after the failure of his appeal, continued to enjoy his hospitality and bounty at Bithoor along with the male members of the European gentry and the official class of Kanpur. The Collector, Mr. Hillersdon, and his wife, and General Sir Hugh Wheeler had all through implicit faith in his goodness and helpfulness.

(*c*) It was established by contemporary official enquiries that when the enraged sepoys were killing the Europeans at the Sattichaura Ghat it was an order sent in writing by Nana Saheb that saved the women and children on that fateful day. These were taken in his protection and kindly treated till grim fate befell them at Bibighar some three weeks later.

In this connection a pertinent question arises : why all this mud-throwing on Nana Saheb ? As we have seen, a political purpose had to be served by sentencing Nand Kumar, and Impey found a suitable opportunity of doing a good turn to a former schoolmate and a subsequent benefactor.* Similarly, there must have been some motive working against the Nana, and this we shall now proceed to discuss.

Firstly

There is no doubt that European soldiers and civilians were killed at the Sattichaura Ghat and that afterwards helpless women and children were mercilessly done to death at Bibighar. So, there had to be discovered some prominent person to be proclaimed as the perpetrator of these foul deeds. Brutality and evil had to be personified.

For the Jokhan Bagh massacre at Jhansi, the name of the Rani of Jhansi was readily available ; for the killing of the Europeans and Eurasians of Daryagunj, Delhi, Bahadur Shah and the imperial princes were ready at hand ; for the Banda and Farrukhabad crimes there were the respective Nawabs to be conveniently drawn into responsibility. Things were not difficult at Kanpur too, for there was the Nana, the remnant of the House of the once famous Peshwas who had ruled over a large part of Hindustan. The actual slayers were the city butchers and one or two hired assassins, but these were insignificant men whose names carried neither emphasis nor spectacular effect. The Nana was the ruler of Kanpur, had a "grudge" against the British, so he could plausibly pass as the real culprit, the very personification of inhumanity.

At the same time, many grim stories about gruesome mutilation of bodies and dishonour to ladies were concocted and circulated. But these happened to be too fantastic to hold belief. They were, therefore, given up after official investigations were completed. But there was no one to wash the mud so deeply thrown over the Nana, and the fiction persists to this day.

*Impey had been irregularly granted some valuable contracts by the Governor-General, and the former was seeking to repay this obligation.

In this context it might interest the reader to know that in England there was the general desire to make out the Nana as the most extraordinary monster of ferocity and slaughter, like some of the favourite characters in the earliest dramas. In 1860, there was exhibited at a fair in England a large canvas daub purporting to represent the Nana; and Sherer, who was in England then, found it "a terrific embodiment of matted hair, rolling eyes and cruel teeth", altogether unlike the real person.

In France too, after the massacre had generally become known, the Nana was turned into an European notoriety. The Frenchmen, with their love for melodrama and taste for contrast, concocted his personality "out of cruel instincts, exceeding those of ordinary barbarism, on the one hand, and with delicate and luxurious habitudes on the other". They exhibited him as "a scented sybarite who read Balzac, played Chopin on the piano, and lolling on a divan, fanned by exquisite odalisques from Cashmere, had an English child brought in occasionally on a pike, for him to examine with *pince-nez*".*

Secondly

There was also the craving to make an example† of Nana Saheb, if only he could be caught. (A reward of one lakh of rupees had been announced for his capture alive; in addition a free pardon was promised to the captor even if he had committed the murder of European women and children). In the case of lesser-known offenders the authorities in many cases tortured the culprit, disgraced him and took his caste before putting him to death. In this respect, they tried to out-do the old forms of indigenous punishment such as the trampling of the culprit by elephant; blowing him off from the mouth of a cannon.

They had also read in history how Aurangzeb had treated the captive Shambhaji before his life was ended.‡ What exactly the authorities were contemplating to do with Nana Saheb in the event of his capture will never be known, but certain it is that he would not have escaped a barbaric form of disgrace—more revolting than the inhuman treatment which was meted out to less celebrated names.

In this connection some of the readers will recollect that during the Second World War a wealthy American citizen had announced a big reward for one who could bring Adolf Hitler alive. He said that he would then put him in a cage to be publicly exhibited around the world. If such thinking is possible in the present stage of advanced civilization, it is easy to conceive of the debasing brutality in which the vengeance of the rulers would have exhibited itself a hundred years ago against a person whom they had led themselves to believe to be the murderer of women and children in cold blood.

Thirdly

The British had committed monstrosities on a large scale in the course of the suppression

* Sherer, page 164.

†Some of the British officers were very keen to give wide publicity to the 'examples' that they had made. At the Ajnala massacre (*see* Chapter 47) there was one sepoy who was so severely wounded that he was unable to walk to the place of execution. He was reprieved that he may himself proclaim the cruel murders of his fellow sepoys, which he had witnessed—a proceeding which, it was thought, would not otherwise be believed by the people.

Another case is recorded by Montgomery Martin: "There will be some stragglers; have them all picked up. . . . . . You have had slaughter enough. We want a few for the troops here, also for evidence".

‡Shambhaji and his minister, Kavi Kalash, were dressed in the garb of wandering anchorites, with rattles in their hands and caps sewn with bells over their heads. They were then tied on camels, with their faces to the tail, and led through the market place of Tulapur—Kincaid and Parasnis, *History of the Maratha People*, 1922 edition, page 57.

of the revolt*. There was no justification for these, and enlightened Englishmen†, both in India and England, had raised their voice against the foul deeds. In these circumstances, it should not seem surprising that a cloak to cover their atrocities was sought to be found by presenting a barbarous monster on the Indian side,—charged with the most evil of human actions and unsurpassed cruelties. And there could have been no better person to chose for this garb than Nana Saheb, and the opportunity was most readily availed of. In this way it was possible to place before the bar of world opinion some extenuating circumstance for the heinous things done by persons who claimed to reform and civilize the "backward peoples" of the earth.

AN APPEAL

It is remarkable of Englishmen that they have not hesitated to put down on record the praise due even to those who took up arms against British rule. Thus, after the British forces succeeded in relieving Arrah, thirty sepoys were taken captive among the townspeople. After a drumhead court-martial they were promptly hanged, or in effect strangled, in the gardens of the Arrah House. But the British writers have been very fair to record that 'all met death with dignity', that the only request made in most instances simply was that they might be allowed to adjust the rope themselves.‡ So, there seems no reason why historic justice should not now be allowed to this unfortunate figure of Indian history and his character washed of the blasphemy with which his name has been unjustly tarnished.

The author appeals to the English people to re-write Nana Saheb, to re-write their valuable *Encyclopaedia* so as to retrieve his character in order that this scion of the famous House of Peshwas may be restored to his rightful place as a worthy, reputable and patriotic figure in the pages of 1857.

"Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
Is the immediate jewel of their souls :
Who steals my purse steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing ;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."**

So could Nana Saheb have said.

* Writes Gilberne Sieveking in *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*: "It is a known fact that after Cawnpore, English officers used to encourage their men to treat the natives barbarously; used to watch with a smile while their men pricked the captives with their bayonets, whilst they were forced to eat cow's flesh, and pig's flesh, a few moments before they were hanged. Indeed, what happened in many cases could be called by no other name than that of revenge—indefensible, barbarous and unworthy of the troops of a Christian country . . .". He has also painfully recorded: "One cannot but deeply regret the manner in which some of our countrymen forced the mutineers' relations--not only themselves--to sin against their religion just before death".

† For instance, Benjamin Disraeli, who later became the Prime Minister of Queen Victoria, said thus in a speech at Newport Pagnell on September 30, 1857: "The horrors of war need no stimulant. The horrors of a war carried on as the war in India is at present, especially need no stimulant. I am persuaded that our soldiers and sailors will exact a retribution which it may perhaps be too terrible to pause upon. . . . . . I for one protest against taking Nana Saheb as a model for the conduct of the British soldier. I protest against meeting atrocities by atrocities".

‡ Gilberne Sieveking, page 106

** Shakespeare, *Othello, the Moor of Venice*.

APPENDIX G

GLOSSARY OF MILITARY AND SPECIAL TERMS

I. MILITARY TERMS.

II. SPECIAL TERMS.

I. MILITARY TERMS.

ADVANCE BASE .... An advance base is established in a theatre of war when it is impracticable to maintain the armed forces operating in the theatre directly from the main base.

Due to time taken in development of natural resources or of artificial facilities the extent to which the forces can be maintained will be restricted and the advance base will, of necessity, depend on the main base. The authorities controlling the main base will often arrange for certain shipments to be made from outside the theatre of operations directly to the advance base.

An advance base generally requires most of the facilities needed in a main base. Given time and the necessary natural and economic facilities, an advance base can be developed into a main base when it becomes desirable to do so.

In air-borne assault, it means a base established to step up the range of aircraft from which a force may be launched or maintained by air.

ADVANCE GUARD .... A moving detachment that protects the head of a moving column for attack. It is also responsible for the gaining of information in regard to the enemy and the ground, brushing aside minor opposition and covering the development of the greater strength required to overcome opposition too strong for it. Its composition and strength will depend on the troops available, the ground and the enemy opposition.

BARRAGE .... It is a moving belt of fire, providing a screen behind which the attacking troops advance. Its aim is to neutralize the enemy on the ground over which own armour and infantry will pass, sufficiently long to enable them to get close to the defenders.

BATTLE DRILL .... Battle drills are set drills for movement by sub-units or even by groups within sub-units in battle. They ensure that time is saved and issue of orders minimised. These are practised during training.

BATTLE PROCEDURE .... The process of simultaneous action by commanders and troops at all levels, including reconnaissance, planning, issue of orders and correct positioning of troops for battle. This ensures that commander's orders and development of troops are carried out without delay.

BEACH-HEAD .... (Amphibious operations) The initial foothold on enemy-occupied territory which is gained by the

assaulting units/formations. Its extent must be sufficient to preclude enemy interference by aimed-small-arms-fire and, if possible, observed-artillery-fire on to the beaches.

BIVOUAC .... The place where an army halts.

BRIDGE-HEAD .... An area of ground held or to be gained by own troops on the enemy's side of an obstacle. The main function of troops holding a bridge-head is to prevent enemy action from interfering with the passage of troops over the obstacle, or with the work of establishing crossings over the obstacles. For this purpose, aimed-small-arms-fire and, if possible, observed-artillery-fire by the enemy, must be prevented. In amphibious operations the sea is the obstacle and the bridge-head is termed as beach-head.

CANNON .... A gun or piece of ordnance, commonly applied to any form of fire-arm fired from a carriage or fixed mounting, in contradiction to small arms which are fired without a rest or support.

CANNONADE .... Continuous gun-fire ; to bombard.

CARBINE .... A rifle with a magazine which fires a bullet.

CLOSE RECONNAISSANCE .... Reconnaissance carried out immediately ahead of own forward troops to obtain detailed information of the ground and of the enemy's location, strength and movements.

COLUMN .... A body of troops on the move.

COVERING FIRE .... A type of artillery supporting fire which aims at neutralisation of enemy small-arms and anti-tank weapons and which can engage the assaulting troops in an attack or counter-attack.

COVERING TROOPS .... A formation or detachment (generally of all arms) detached to observe, harass and delay the enemy's advance so that he is prevented from interfering with a withdrawal and/or preparation for defence. The covering troops carry out this task initially from a covering position and subsequently from successive delaying positions.

DETACHMENT .... A portion of an army or navy taken from the main body and employed on some special service.

ENSIGN .... The lowest commissioned rank for British officers in the army in olden days.

ESCALADE .... The action of scaling the walls of a fortified place by means of ladders.

FIELD FORCE .... A force which goes to war.

FLANK GUARD .... A detachment, not necessarily mobile, that protects a force on the move (and sometimes its axis of communications) from attack from the flank. It may get out ahead of the moving force in order to seize successive tactical features flanking the axis of move and hold them for as long as necessary. Its composition and strength will depend on the troops available, the ground and the likely threat.

FORCE .... It is also used to denote a military or naval unit.

FORT .... A fortified place ; a position fortified for defensive or protective purposes, usually surrounded by a ditch, rampart and parapet, and garrisoned with troops.

FORTRESS .... A strong place. A military stronghold.

FORWARD BASE .... A base for forward holdings and installations, when the distance between the forward formation

and the base or the advance-base becomes too great to guarantee punctual delivery.

FUSILIERS .... Infantry units organised to fire a fusillade with their light weapons. They were light troops, that is lightly armed and lightly equipped, and formed the leading echelons of the army. Indian Army units adopted this, and there were fusiliers in the Madras Army. But these were disbanded when the Madras Army was re-organised into the Indian Army under the Kitchner Reforms of 1903. There are no fusiliers now.

GARRISON .... A body of soldiers stationed in a place for its defence.

GRAPE .... A term used to signify the type of contents in a shell. In the olden days the shell used to have something like a .12 bore ammunition, that is a lot of small pellets which on explosion used to split into small bits. Hence known as grape.

GRENADE . . .. A hollow shell filled with gunpowder thrown by hand or shot from a rifle.

GRENADIERS .... A term denoting a type of infantry battalion which derived its name from the fact that its men were equipped with grenades. These grenades were thrown at enemy positions by selected men before the heavy infantry advanced and closed with the enemy and attacked the positions. There is still one Grenadiers' Regiment in the Indian Army.

GUN .... A weapon consisting essentially of a metal tube from which heavy missiles are thrown up by the force of gun-powder or by explosive force of any kind.

GUNS AND HOWITZERS .... These are equipments which have the following properties :

(a) they give to projectiles a specified initial velocity and direction of motion, and

(b) they do so by the rapid burning of a propellant charge in a chamber, producing gas under pressure which forces the projectile to move along a barrel (also called 'bore' or 'piece').

The basic differences are :

GUN . . . . Equipment for low-angle firing of shells at high velocity.

HOWITZER . . . . Equipment for high-angle firing of shells at low velocity.

HAVILDAR .... A sepoy (Indian) non-commissioned officer, corresponding to a sergeant.

MAIN-GUARD .... A part of the advance guard which goes out of the main body of the army when it is advancing to meet the enemy.

MATCH-LOCK .... A musket (any kind of smooth-bore military hand-gun) with a lock containing a match for firing it. Gun with lock in which match is placed for igniting (making intensely hot, heating to the point of combustion or chemical change, setting fire to) powder.

MATCH-LOCK-MEN .... Men working on or using match-locks.

MORTAR .... A weapon which fires a shell at a high trajectory.

MUSKET .... This term was generally applied to the firearm of the infantry-soldier from about 1550 up to and even beyond the universal adoption of rifled small arms in about 1850—60.

MUSKET BALL .... The ammunition used for muskets.

NAJIB .... A militia man; an irregular soldier.

PRIZE .... Prize, in law, may be defined as the vessels or goods of the enemy captured by a belligerent captor on the high seas, rivers, ports or land. In other words, it means property seized in war.

The property in prize does not pass to the captor until it has been brought within jurisdiction and adjudicated upon. But, on the contrary, the property in captured warships passes, on capture, to the captor; they are brought to the prize court only for the determination of prize money.

PRIZE COURT .... A court having jurisdiction to adjudicate upon 'prize' or property seized in war.

QUARTER-GUARD .... A guard provided at the residence of officers and men to protect them during the period of sleep or rest. It now symbolises the small detachment which presents compliments to the visiting officer and to guard arms during non-training periods.

RECONNAISSANCE .... Reconnaissance is the process of obtaining information by direct examination of an area of ground. It may be either strategic or tactical.

REGIMENT .... Is a term to denote a static formation which has a number of small units. In the Armoured Corps there are battalions which are called regiments, while in the Infantry the regiment consists of a number of infantry battalions, the infantry battalion being a unit of field formation. The regiment, therefore, denotes a home for the active battalions.

RISALA .... Cavalry.

RISALDAR .... A cavalry commander.

ROUND SHOT ... A solid ball of iron which used to be hurled at the defensive position of the enemy to break walls.

SABRE .... A cavalry-sword having a curved blade specially adopted for cutting.

SEPOY .... An Indian soldier.

SHRAPNEL .... Is similar to grape, but is a modern term to signify that the shell itself bursts into small short pieces.

SIEGE-TRAIN .... Is a term which signifies a column of transport. In old days it consisted of bullock-carts, elephants and other means of transport. Now, it includes railway trains, motor lorries and even aeroplanes which 'may carry' such equipment as will be needed to overcome prepared defensive positions like a fort or a fortress.

SORTIE .... A small detachment sent out for action, as for example, a sortie of aeroplanes sent out for reconnaissance.

STORM .... This word is used when the position is assailed *en masse* and against an enemy which is not prepared to give in.

SUBA OR SUBEDAR .... The chief Indian officer of a company of infantry. (As civil terms both mean the governor of a province during Muslim administration. The word SUBA also means a province.)

II. SPECIAL TERMS

BAEE (BAI) .... This usually appears as a suffix to the names of Maharashtrian ladies ; it literally means a lady.

BARKANDAZ .... An armed retainer or an armed policeman.

BATTA .... Premium or discount. The sepoys of the Company's armies were paid an additional allowance (*batta*) when they had to go for a fight in far-off lands. It was mostly intended to cover the higher cost of living at those places.

EILCHI OR ELICHI .... An envoy or diplomatic agent.

FIRANGI OR FIRINGI .... The term was applied by Indians to denote an European.

FIRMAN .... An order, grant or patent. The term was mostly applied to orders issued during Muslim administration over the seal of the sovereign.

GHAZI .... A Muslim engaged in a war of religion.

INAM ..... In its technical sense it means rent-free land.

KARINDA .... An agent.

KHARITA .... The silk bag in which a nobleman used to enclose his letter ; from which it came to mean a letter.

MAZHABI SIKHS .... These were the descendants of a body of sweepers whom Guru Govind Singh had sent to Delhi to fetch the body of his martyred father, Guru Teg Bahadur Singh, and whom he received into the Sikh Khalsa for their daring courage.

NAZIM .... Governor.

PESHWA .... It is a Persian word, which means the foremost or the head (*cf.* the expression *Peshwa khandan,* meaning head of family). During the time of Shivaji and the Peshwas, Persian was, to some extent, being used as a language for official purposes. The word Peshwa was accordingly adopted from Persian to denote the position of the First Minister of the Maratha empire, the nominal head of the empire being the Raja of Satara, the direct descendant of Shivaji. In course of time, the *Peshwa* became almost completely independent of the Raja of Satara, but the designation *Peshwa* continued to be applied thereafter.

TATYA .... A Marathi word used as a surname for a high-placed person of universal respectability.

VILAYATI OR WILAYATI .... Vilayat means a kingdom or country. The Afghans specially applied this word to their own country, hence they were known in India as *Vilayatis.*

WALI .... Governor.

APPENDIX H

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[WITH A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE BOOKS]

NOTE—An exhaustive list of the books and papers bearing on the rebellion can be seen in Dr. S. N. Sen's *Eighteen Fifty-Seven* and in the several volumes of *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh : Source Material*, published by the Uttar Pradesh Government.

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Dr. Ishwari Prasad, the well-known historian, has written a foreword to the Hindi version. In it he has stated that so far as the question of authenticity of the Diary is concerned, it is necessary to establish it. But apart from that, the Diary is an important document according to Dr. Ishwari Prasad.

The Diary gives a brief account of the parentage and birth of Nana Saheb, his adoption by Baji Rao, his early days in Bithoor, the part he played in the struggle, his marriage with the Princess of Sangli, an account of Baji Rao and such other matters.

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FORBES-MITCHELL, WILLIAM .... *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny 1857—59.* The book was first published in London by Macmillan & Co. in 1893. It was reprinted in 1894, 1895, 1897 and 1904. (The references in the present book are to the 1904 edition.)

The book includes the description of the siege, relief and capture of Lucknow and of the campaigns in Rohilkhand and Avadh. It also gives an account of the uprising at Kanpur.

Forbes-Mitchell was a Sergeant in the 93rd Sutherland Highlanders' Regiment which was part of the British Army in England. It was an infantry regiment of 1,100 soldiers under the command of Colonel Adrian Hope. It had started from England for the China expedition. In the way, orders were received in August 1857 that the Regiment must proceed to India to quell the mutiny.

This Scottish Regiment took a prominent part in several battles of the revolt. After disembarking at Calcutta it proceeded to Varanasi, thence to Allahabad, thence to Kanpur *via* Fatehpur.

It was while serving with this Regiment that Forbes-Mitchell obtained first-hand information of the scenes and incidents which he describes in the book. Other incidents mentioned in it, which he had not seen with his own eyes, were carefully verified before being put in print. The whole book was pursued with great care by another officer who was present at many of the operations.

Forbes-Mitchell endeavoured to write in an objective manner. He writes, "I wish my readers to know that I merely describe facts as they appeared to me in 1857. Nothing is farther from my intention than to revive the old race-

hatreds ; the real causes of the mutiny and its horrors have yet to be written."

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The first volume deals with the *Nature and Origin of the Struggle*. In the subsequent four volumes the mass of material has been divided geographically—the second volume dealing with *Avadh*, the third with *Bundelkhand and Adjoining Territories*, the fourth with *Eastern and Adjoining Districts* and the fifth with *Western Districts and Rohilkhand*.

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British. During the space of 14 months between this and the outbreak, he was in constant touch with the Indian population and his door was open to all who desired to make any communication on business. He was amongst the besieged at the Residency and his book thus carries the authority of one who had first-hand knowledge of the events.

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MOWAT, R. B. .... *New History of Great Britain*. Oxford, 1926 edition.

MUNRO, WILLIAM BENETT .... *Governments of Europe*. This is a standard book on the forms of Government of European countries with an analytical description of the principles of government and the specialities of the constitutions of the European countries, particularly the United Kingdom.

MUTINY NARRATIVES, NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, 1857-58. This was printed and published under the authority of Government. It contains district-wise narratives of events attending the outbreak of disturbances and the restoration of British authority in the various districts of Uttar Pradesh (then known as the North-Western Provinces) in 1857-58. The narrative of each district was prepared by the District Magistrate and submitted to the Commissioner of the Division who in turn submitted it to the Local Government. The narratives were prepared under the directions contained in Government order No. 212, dated April 30, 1858, and were to be laid before the Governor-General.

NAGAR, AMRIT LAL .... *Gadar Ke Phul.* (In Hindi). Published by the Information Department of U. P. Government in 1957.

NANAK CHAND .... *Diary of events during the uprising at Kanpur*. Printed with Mutiny Narratives, Kanpur Section.

NANA SAHEB'S ISHTIHARNAMA .... This *Ishtiharnama* was addressed to Her Majesty the Queen of England, the British Parliament, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, the Governor-General of India, the Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and all officers, civil and military It was delivered to Major Richardson in April, 1859, and has been reproduced in Chapter 42.

NEHRU, JAWAHARLAL .... *Discovery of India*. Published by the Signet Press, Calcutta, 1946.

The book was written by the author in Ahmednagar Fort Prison during the five months from April to September, 1944. This was his ninth term of imprisonment in the struggle for Indian independence. Along with the author there were in the prison other eminent Indian leaders such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ; Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Acharya Narendra Deo and Mr. Asaf Ali.

The book deals with the history of India written in a completely new style. It lays emphasis on the cultural and social aspects of Indian thought and analyses the basic ideas of Indian culture and tradition. It traces the history of India from the ancient times up to 1945, when the foundations for the Independence ultimately achieved in August 1947 were being laid. It gives a lucid interpretation of modern problems seen in a broad and full historical focus by one of the noblest personalities of our age.

OSWELL, G. D. .... *Rulers of India, Volume I (the Mutiny era and after)*. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1908. The author was the Principal of the Rajkumar College, Raipur. In this volume he gives sketches of Lord Dalhousie, Lord Canning, Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir Hugh Rose, Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo and General Havelock.

PARASNIS, D. B. .... *Maharani Lakshmi Bai Saheb Hyanche Charitra*. In Marathi. Satara, 1894.

POONA GAZETTEER .... *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency*, Volume XVIII, Part III—Poona (1885). Published

under the authority of Government. It contains a vivid account of many matters connected with the Peshwas of Poona.

RAIKES, C. .... *Notes on the Revolt in North-Western Provinces of India*. London, 1858.

RAJENDRA SINGH, BRIGADIER .... *History of the Indian Army*. This is an unpublished book by an Army officer of great experience and ability. Brigadier Rajendra Singh is the author of several books on Army matters, the most popular of which is his book *Organisation and Administration in the Indian Army*.

REVIEW OF EVIDENCE .... *"Review of the evidence taken at Kanpur regarding the revolt at that station in June and July, 1857"*, is the full title.

This document was prepared by Lieutenant Colonel G. Williams, Military Secretary and Commissioner of Police, North-Western Provinces. It is dated at Allahabad December 31, 1859. It is printed in the volume entitled *Mutiny Narratives, North-Western Provinces, 1857—59.*

RIZVI, DR. S. A. A. .... See *Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh* and *Sangharsh-Kaleen Netaon ki Jeevaniyan.*

ROBERTSON, H. D. .... *District duties during the Revolt in North-Western Provinces of India in 1857*. London, 1859.

RUSSELL, SIR W. HOWARD .... *My Diary in India in the year 1858-59*. Two volumes. London, 1860.

Sangharsh-Kaleen Netaon ki Jeevaniyan, (संघर्षकालीन नेताओं की जीवनियां)
Part I, second edition. This has been published by the Information Department of the Uttar Pradesh Government on behalf of the Advisory Board for the History of Freedom Struggle in U. P. It contains short biographical sketches of (1) Nana Saheb, (2) Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah, (3) Tatya Tope, (4) Nawab Khan Bahadur Khan, (5) Babu Kunwar Singh, (6) Maharani Lakshmi Bai and (7) Rana Beni Madhav Singh.

These monographs have been written by several officials of the Advisory Board under the general supervision of Dr. S. A. A. Rizvi of the U. P. Educational Service and Member-Secretary of the Advisory Board. They contain a succinct account of the principal events of the life of these leaders and the part played by them in the uprising of 1857.

SARDESAI, G. S. .... *Main Currents of Maratha History*. Bombay, 1926 ; 1949.

SARDESAI, G. S. .... *New History of the Marathas*. This is a book in three volumes published in 1948 by the Phoenix Publications, Bombay. It is a standard work on Maratha history which the reputed author has written after long years of study and research.

SAVARKAR, V. D. .... *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*. This book was originally written in Marathi in 1908, by Savarkar, the noted revolutionary, when he was 24 years of age and was in London. But no publisher in India could be found willing to publish such a revolutionary book. An English translation was then secretly made in London and through novel devices was printed in Holland, and smuggled to France, England and India for secret sale. But before it was actually printed, the British and Indian Governments had got scent that it was being printed somewhere. They proscribed it although it had not yet been printed and published—an altogether unprecedented action. Subsequently, the book was openly published in France and was

read by interested persons in England, Ireland, France, Russia, America, Egypt and Germany.

In India, the work became the master-book of the revolutionaries. The demand for the book from all quarters was so great that its copies used to be secretly sold and resold, in some cases at the price of Rs.300 each. The ban on its entry into India was eventually lifted by the Congress Government of Bombay in May 1946, whereafter in 1947 the first authorised version was published in India.

The author himself had been carrying on revolutionary activities against the British Government in India since 1910 when he was arrested in the campaign of prosecutions launched by the Government against the revolutionaries. There is, however, a separate story about his escape, re-arrest, prosecution and transportation to the Andamans for two life sentences amounting to some 50 years of imprisonment.

SEN, DR. S. N. . . . *Eighteen Fifty-Seven.* A new history of the struggle. Published by the Government of India in 1957, but they have made it clear, and rightly, that they are not in any way committed by any expression of the author's opinions.

Dr. Sen, an eminent historian, was formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Delhi University. He was commissioned by the Union Ministry of Education to write this book. In that connection he went to England also to study the mass of material which is available only in that country. His directions were to write the book from the standpoint of a true historian.

The book, written in a masterly style, is a standard work on 1857 and very popular. New materials hitherto unexamined have found place in the book and Dr. Sen has ably presented both sides of the medal with an objective and impartial interpretation of the events.

SHARMA, S. R. . . . . *The Making of Modern India.* Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1951.

SHEPHERD, W. J. . . . . *A personal narrative of the outbreak and massacre at Cawnpore during the Sepoy Revolt of 1857.* Lucknow, 1879, 1886.

SHERER, J. W. . . . . *Sherer's Account.* The full name is "*Some Accounts of the Mutiny and Subsequent Events at Kanpur*" by Mr. J. W. Sherer, District Magistrate, Kanpur. It is dated January 13, 1859, and forms an enclosure to the *Kanpur Narrative.*

SHERER, J. W. . . . . *Havelock's March on Cawnpore, 1857.* The author was a member of the Bengal Civil Service and had come to India in 1846. He served as Assistant Magistrate in certain districts, and immediately before the revolt was Magistrate and Collector of Fatehpur. On the out-break at Fatehpur he secretly escaped to Banda whence he went to Allahabad. From there he accompanied General Havelock on his march to Kanpur. Later, he became Collector of Kanpur.

The author has described in detail all matters connected with the preparations for the march, the recapture of Kanpur and the state of affairs at Kanpur after the restoration of the British authority. It also includes a narration of the punishments meted out to those who were captured as also to civil employees of the Company and members of the civil population who were found or suspected to have aided the revolutionaries. The account given in the book is authentic in every respect, being an account written by an eye-witness.

The author has tried to approach the subject in a balanced spirit and the description of the events which he has given is couched in simple language. He has not hesitated in denouncing certain exaggerated accounts of the unsatisfactory happenings at Kanpur during the rule of Nana Saheb.

SIEVEKING, I. GIBERNE . . . *A Turning Point in the Indian Mutiny*, London, 1910.

SMITH, GOLDWIN . . . . *Lectures on the Study of History*. Second edition.

SMITH, VINCENT, A. . . . . *Oxford History of India*. Oxford, 1958. Third edition, edited by Percival Spear.

SOLVYNS, F. B. . . . . *Les Hindous*. In French. 1811.

STANDING, PERCY CROSS. . . . *Guerilla Leaders of the World*.

Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North-Western Provinces of India, Volume VI (1881) . . . . This contains three sections, one dealing with Kanpur, the other with Gorakhpur and the third with Basti. The Kanpur Section has been written by Mr. F. N. Wright of the Bengal Civil Service. The whole volume has been edited by E. T. Atkinson of the Bengal Civil Service and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. The volume was printed in 1881 under the authority of the Government of the North-Western Provinces.

Mr. Wright had a great deal of local knowledge of the district of Kanpur and for this reason his statements are of particular value from the point of view of accuracy.

SYNOPSIS OF EVIDENCE . . . . The formal description is *Synopsis of the Evidence of the Kanpur Mutiny*. This too is printed in the Volume *Mutiny Narratives*.

TAHMANKAR, D. V. . . . . *Rani of Jhansi*. London, 1958.

TEMPLE, Sir RICHARD . . . . *Oriental Experience*.

THOMSON, CAPTAIN MOWBRAY . . . . *Story of Cawnpore*. London, 1859.

THOMSON, EDWARD . . . *The Other Side of the Medal*. London, 1925.

TREVELYAN, SIR G. B. . . . . *Cawnpore*. This book was first published in 1865 in London by Macmillan & Co. It deals with the happenings at Kanpur from the time of the outbreak until the tragedy of Bibighar. It also contains a chapter describing the city of Cawnpore and the Cantonment with an account of the Indian troops with European officers stationed there. The causes of the mutiny have also been briefly discussed.

The narrative in the book is mostly based on the investigations made by Colonel Williams, the *Diary of Nanak Chand, the Story of Cawnpore* by Captain Mowbray Thomson, Government Narratives of the Mutiny and the Records of the Home Office, Government of India, then at Calcutta.

Sir George Trevelyan came to India in 1862 as the Private Secretary to his father, Sir Charles Trevelyan, then Finance Member to the Government of India ; it was then that he wrote the present book and two other humorous books, *The Dak Bungalow* and the *Competition Wallah*. But he is best known for the *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, his uncle, a book which is recognized as a masterpiece of biography.

WARD PRICE, G. . . . . *Extra-Special Correspondent*. This book contains the reminiscences of the exciting life of a journalist who has roamed the world

for exclusive stories. In this book the author gives a fascinating account of off-the-record interviews with Hitler, Mussolini, Lord Curzon, Kamal Pasha, Duke of Windsor, Ludendroff, Churchill and many others. The book also contains a description of the last days of Nana Saheb and about which a reference has been made in Chapter 42 of the present book.

WARNER, GEORGE ; MARTEN *and* MUIR .... *New Ground-work of British History.* 1943-edition.

WILLIAMS, LIEUT.-COL. .... *Memorandum on the investigations regarding the outbreak at Kanpur in June 1857.* This has been printed with the *Mutiny Narratives, North-Western Provinces,* in the section relating to Kanpur.

INDEX

Note 1—This index has been arranged alphabetically in respect of catch-words. The sub-captions have been arranged page-wise except in some cases where the chronological sequence has been followed.

Note 2—An effort has been made to make it fairly descriptive, but names and places, not of importance to the subject-matter discussed, have been omitted.

کارواں رفت و اندازهٔ جاہش پیدا است
زاں نشانہا کہ بہ ہر راہ گزر افتادند

THE CARAVAN HAS PASSED, BUT ITS GLORY AND GRANDEUR CAN BE EASILY IMAGINED FROM THE MARKS LEFT ON EVERY ROAD.

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PSUP—A. P. 147 Genl. (Pub.)—1961. 2,0